

Luke: A Concise Commentary

Central Concepts

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The Gospel According to Luke

Introduction

The word *gospel* means “the good news” or “the reward for bringing the good news of God’s activity in Jesus Christ.” It describes the character of this news about and from God and was applied to the four gospel accounts or narratives (Mark, Matthew, Luke, John) in the 2nd century A.D. None of them are biographies but rather contain selected episodes in the life and ministry of Jesus for the purpose of alerting, awakening, and advocating strong faith in Jesus as God’s ultimate portrayal of Himself in human form.

Furthermore, these four gospel accounts are not set forth in strictly objective historical sequence or perspectives. Rather, they record their selected episodes in history with a theological twist; that is, with an interpretation which highlights or stresses God’s salvation purposes in and through these selected events.

Unlike the Gospel according to Mark, which has no formal introduction, and Matthew with a genealogical introduction which begins with Abraham and proceeds to Jesus, and John which begins with Jesus as God Himself, Luke begins with Jesus and moves backward to Adam.

According to Geldenhuys¹, there are several unique features in this gospel: **1.** Jesus is the Divine Physician Who came to seek and save the lost; **2.** Jesus is presented as a universal Redeemer of the whole world and little to no emphasis on Him being the Messiah of the OT; **3.** His genealogy begins with Jesus Himself (3:23) and goes back to Adam, the son of God (3:38); **4.** There is a homely atmosphere: various houses, publicans at table, the men of Emmaus, etc.; **5.** Stresses the significance of women; **6.** Jesus is interested in the physical, as well as the spiritual state of people; **7.** Jesus is concerned with the perfecting of human personalities.

William Barclay² points out other particulars: **1.** Luke is the only Gentile writer in the NT (Col. 4:14) and a doctor at that; **2.** Luke writes an orderly arrangements of facts (1:3); **3.** Luke writes to a Gentile, Theophilus, a normal title for an official in the Roman government (1:3); **4.** Luke writes primarily to Gentiles: (a) his writing is dated from the Roman Emperor and governor; (b) he seldom quotes from the OT; (c) he gives Hebrew words their Greek equivalent; (d) he never uses the Jewish term Rabbi but instead uses Master; **5.** he stress prayer in the life of Jesus: (a) baptism (3:21); (b) before conflict with Pharisees (5:16); (c) before choosing the Twelve (6:12); (d) before prediction of His death (9:18); (e) at the Transfiguration (9:29); (f) upon the Cross (23:46); (g) for Peter in his hour of testing (22:32); (h) the prayer parables of the Friend at Midnight (11:5-13) and the Unjust Judge (18:1-8); **6.** The importance of women: (a) birth narrative is from Mary’s viewpoint; (b) Elizabeth; (c) Anna; (d) the widow at Nain; (e) the woman who anointed Jesus’ feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee; etc.; **7.** The issue of praise: (a) the Magnificat (1:46-55); (b) the Benedictus (1:68-79); (c) the Nunc Dimittis (2:29-32).

Rather than a verse-by-verse commentary, this volume is arranged in sections or divisions (as noted in the *Overview*) where the primary thrusts or central concepts of each section/division are highlighted. It, nevertheless, is an exhaustive commentary, covering each chapter and the verses in it. Thus, the main focus will be the main focus of each section of scripture. This will establish continuity and clarity without overcrowding readers with particulars which could shift attention away from Luke’s central aim and purpose.

¹43-45.

²2-6.

Luke: An Overview – Scripture in a Structural Format

- I PREPARATION for Jesus (1:1-4:13)**
 - A. Clarification of Purpose and Person Addressed (1:1-4)
 - B. Annunciations/Announcements Concerning Jesus (1:5-38)
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- II PRESENTATION of Jesus (4:14-9:17)**
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- III PROFILES on Jesus (9:18-21:4)**
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 - B. Entry of Jesus (19:28-21:4)

- IV PRONOUNCEMENTS by Jesus (21:5-38)**
 - A. Perilous Times Foretold by Jesus (21:5-28)
 - B. Parable of Fig Tree by Jesus (21:29-33)
 - C. Parousia of Jesus (21:34-36)
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- V PASSIONS of Jesus (22:1-23:56)**
 - A. Plot to Kill Jesus (22:1-3)
 - B. Price Agreement Concerning Betrayal of Jesus (22:4-6)
 - C. Passover and Lord's Supper with Jesus (22:7-38)
 - D. Praying of Jesus (22:39-46)
 - E. Partners against Jesus (22:47-71)
 - F. Pilate and Herod and Jesus (23:1-25)
 - G. Provision for and Proclamation by Jesus (23:26-32)
 - H. Place of a Skull and Crucifixion of Jesus (23:33-49)
 - I. Pallbearer and Burial of Jesus (23:50-56)

- VI POWER of Jesus (24:1-52)**
 - A. Resurrection of Jesus (24:1-12)
 - B. Appearances of Jesus (24:13-49)
 - C. Ascension of Jesus (24:50-51)
 - D. Obedience to Jesus (24:52)

Luke: A Commentary

This commentary is primarily arranged in the popular and general fourfold division “reflecting both a chronological and a geographical sequence: (1) the Jerusalem infancy narratives (1-2), (2) the Galilean mission (3:1-9:50), (3) the journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27), and (4) the Jerusalem ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus (19:28-24:53).³

The Jerusalem Infancy Narratives (1:1-2:52)

I PREPARATION for Jesus (1:1-4:13)

A. Clarification of Purpose and Person Addressed (1:1-4)

As the author of both this gospel narrative and the Acts of the Apostles, the prologues (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 11-2) to both are connected; that is, Acts is a continuation of Luke and is addressed to the same person: Theophilus – “God lover” or “Friend of God.” With these facts in mind, it is easy to see that Luke “has made a larger contribution to the New Testament quantitatively than any other.”⁴ Indeed, these two writings are larger than all of Paul’s put together. His purpose is to present an “orderly account” or “logical sequence”⁵ of information about the ministry of Jesus – perhaps, he means expanding that of Mark which is a shorter account and written years before Luke.

B. Annunciations/Announcements Concerning Jesus (1:5-38)

The annunciation or announcement of the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah occurs in 1:5-25, and that of Jesus to Mary in 1:26-38. It is imperative to see the connection between these two: John the Baptist representing Judaism and Jesus representing the beginning of Christianity, the latter being the fulfillment of the former. 1:5-7 introduces Zecharias; 1:8-12 contains the appearance of the angel of the Lord; 1:13-17 contains the angel’s message; 1:18-23 notes the unbelief of Zecharias. 1:24-25 refers to Elizabeth’s conception. “Zecharias remained speechless until after the birth of John, because he had not trusted God’s promise.”⁶

The point of the announcement of Jesus’ birth is to demonstrate that His coming into the world was an act of God and not of man. He was the Son of God not because of Mary but because of the Holy Spirit. 1:26-33 contains the message from the angel; 1:34 refers to Mary’s question which was her “perplexity of innocence.”⁷ The angel’s answer is contained in 1:35-38. Mary’s response was one of commitment to God and contentment with the circumstance.

³Ellis, 184.

⁴Reicke, 9.

⁵Tolbert, 18.

⁶Stagg, 19.

⁷Childers, 436.

C. Consultations about Jesus (1:39-80)

Mary's visit to Elizabeth is contained in 1:39-45 and her hymn of praise to God in 1:46-55. Before he was born, John was aware of the unborn Messiah. Elizabeth explains to Mary why she calls her "blessed." Mary magnifies the Lord.

The birth of John is contained in 1:57-66 and Zacharias's prophetic hymn in 1:67-79. V. 80 "contains all that we are permitted to know further concerning the private life of John; and these words give the whole account of his domestic development."⁸ In other words, here "we have about thirty years of John's biography in one sentence."⁹

D. Childhood of Jesus (2:1-52)

There are primarily four basic features of the childhood of Jesus which are briefly enumerated:

1. Birth in Bethlehem (2:1-7)
2. Blessings to Shepherds (2:8-14)
3. Broadcasting of News of the Babe (2:15-20)
4. Boyhood of Jesus (2:21-52): a. Presentation to the Lord (2:21-24); b. Praise of Simeon (2:25-33); c. Prediction of Simeon (2:34-35); d. Prophetess: Anna (2:36-38); e. Passover (2:39-42); f. Puzzlement (2:43-52)

As far as the growth of Jesus is concerned, Robbins¹⁰ notes the following events: "On the eighth day after birth he was circumcised and given his name (Lev. 12:3). *After forty days he was presented in the Temple (Lev. 12). *When he was three years old, he was given the fringed garments (Num. 15:38-41; Deut. 22:12). *At five years of age he began to learn portions of the Law. *At the age of six or seven he was sent to the elementary school. This was connected with the local/synagogue, and since the manual of instruction was the Book of the Law, it was known as 'the House of the Book.' *At ten years of age he began the study of the Mishna (a compilation of traditional interpretations). *At his twelfth birthday, a Jewish boy became bar mitzvah (a son of the law). At that time he entered upon all the privileges and responsibilities of an Israelite, including attendance at the Feast of the Passover. *At age thirteen he wore, for the first time, the phylacteries which the Jews always put on at the recital of the daily prayers. He also was now responsible for the practice of the commands. His childhood was over, and he left the House of the Book and began his preparation for his proper lifework." These, of course, were in addition to His normal physical growth and development.

⁸Bliss, 41.

⁹Childers, 444.

¹⁰57-58

The Galilean Mission (3:1-9:50)

E. Forerunner of Jesus (3:1-20)

The beginning of John's ministry is placed in a political context (3:1-2) and while he was in some unidentified wilderness as a wandering preacher. All this was in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (40:3-5) and a modified form of 52:10. His message was forceful and his motives and manners were fearless (3:7-9). The multitude's request was met with acts of selfless concern for meeting the needs of others, compassion and contentment (3:10-14). John emphatically declares that he is not the Christ, establishing, without reservations, that he is inferior to the real Christ Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit – the words “by fire” stress “the judgment which could be escaped only by repentance in view of the kingdom of God”¹¹ - and other things to reenforce his lowly position (3:15-17). Because of John's reproach of Herod the tetrarch, he was imprisoned (3:18-20).

F. Baptism of Jesus (3:21-22)

This single event has escaped definitive answers to the *Why* question throughout the history of Christianity. The only scriptural answer is Mt. 3:14: in some sense “to fulfill all righteousness,” which here is stamped with God's approval. Despite the absence of definitive answers, Manson's position seems to sufficient: “Jesus recognizes in John's effort to create a new Israel the purpose of God; and willingly enters into it. The baptism of John is from heaven (Mk. 11:29f). That is sufficient for Jesus. He is to obey the call which comes through the last and greatest of the prophets.”¹² Beasley-Murray adds, “He who so taught, lived and died, with a moral consciousness that did not falter from the baptism to the cross, was assuredly not baptized as a sinner seeking mercy of the Judge; if it was for sins, it was sins not His own. . . . the divine will must be blindly obeyed, without asking the reason for it. . . . He took his first step in bearing the sins of the world.”¹³ Indeed, by this act, “Jesus identified himself with his people, took on himself their guilt, and received with and for them the baptism of repentance.”¹⁴ His baptism was a public and “solemn consecration to his office as Messiah”¹⁵ – not the politically popular type but to being the suffering servant - the commitment to which constantly challenged Him during the days of His flesh through various forms of temptation.

G. Genealogy of Jesus (3:23-38)

As Johnson observes, “this genealogy runs *backward* from Jesus to God

¹¹Stagg, 214.

¹²149-150.

¹³47, 49

¹⁴De Dietrich, 23.

¹⁵Robbins, 63.

(no other known biblical or Jewish genealogy culminates in the naming of God). Perhaps Luke saw in the genealogy one way of understanding the ascription of divine sonship to Jesus. He is Son of God through the line of OT patriarchs and subsequent historical figures. He inaugurates a new epoch and yet derives significance from his historical continuity with the redemptive history of the OT and of Judaism.”¹⁶

H. Temptations of Jesus (4:1-15)

Barclay suggests the meanings of the three temptation accounts are as follows: “(i) the first temptation was to *bribe people* into following him with material things (2-4); (ii) the second temptation was *the temptation to compromise* (5-8); (iii) the third temptation was *to give the people sensations* (9-12).¹⁷ The temptations of Jesus in the rest of the NT are hardly noted - except Heb. 2:18; 4:5 - “but this is consistent with its general silence on the main events of Jesus’ life apart from His crucifixion and resurrection.”¹⁸ Childers adds a fourth: “the rewards of victory over temptation, 13-15.”¹⁹ These rewards are seen in the spreading of His fame through all the region around Galilee, and His teaching in synagogues, resulting in “being glorified” – that is, the presence of God being recognized “by all” in Him.

II PRESENTATION of Jesus (4:14-9:17)

A. Rejection of Jesus (4:16-31)

It is customary to read sections of scripture (Law & Prophets) in the synagogue while standing in respect of the revelation within it. Apparently, the portion of the Law had already been read and now Jesus proceeds to read from the Prophets: Isaiah 61:1-2; 58:6. This was “appointed for the morning of the great Day of Atonement.”²⁰

Nevertheless, He was rejected in his hometown of Nazareth because He spoke of a worldwide mission that resembled the days of Elijah and Elisha. The people became violent toward Him when He pointed out from their own Scriptures that the prophets of God never limited God to Israel, that there would be “no significant distinction between Jews and Gentiles.”²¹

B. Credentials of Jesus (4:31-9:17)

1. Healing of Demon-Possessed Man on Sabbath (4:31-37)

¹⁶430.

¹⁷43-44.

¹⁸Blomberg, 786.

¹⁹466.

²⁰Van Oosterzee, 73.

²¹Stagg, 44.

Having escaped the intentions of the Nazarenes to kill Him, He made His way to the city of Capernaum in Galilee and taught with astonishment and power on the Sabbath days. Whatever degree of silence and reverence existed in the synagogue meeting, it was abruptly ended by an exclamation of terror and fear by an evil spirit. Jesus immediately rebukes him as proof of His divine authority and power. His fame continued to spread.

2. Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law and Others (4:38-41)

This healing took place in the house of Peter where she was stricken with "a great fever," "an indication of [Luke's] medical knowledge."²² That evening, Jesus healed all who were sick with various diseases, including the casting out of demons. With no desire to hear their proclamation of His Messiahship, since He had nothing in common with them, He rebuked them.

3. Tour of Galilee (4:42-44)

The next day, He declared the necessity of continuing to preach the good news of the kingdom of God to other Galilean cities and in their synagogues.

4. The Miraculous Catch of Fish & Calling of Fishermen (5:1-11)

As a result of His increasing popularity among the people, a huge crowd was gathered around the lake of Gennesaret. In order to have a better position from which to teach, Jesus entered Simon's boat. At the conclusion of His teaching, Jesus directs Simon to launch out further from the shore. Despite his professional experts, etc., he did accordingly and caught an amazing amount of fish. They were probably used to feed the multitude. This prompted Simon's realization at what a sinner he was. Jesus transitions the event into a call for discipleship and the catching of men.

5. Healing of Leper (5:12-16)

Luke mentions ten lepers in 17:11-19, but here he mentions just one. However, he adds an expression that is not in the later account, that this one was "full of leprosy." The term likely indicates "a chronic condition, quite possibly clinical leprosy."²³ Broadus adds, "so long and badly affected with the disease, that his whole body was tainted, and he, naturally, hopeless of relief."²⁴ Jesus instructs him to adhere

²²Geldenhuys, 179.

²³Harrison, 106.

²⁴98.

to the requirements of the Law (Lev. 13-14) for healing as testimony or proof to the people. The man, however, disobeyed, perhaps out of gratitude, but it was against Jesus' instruction and may have had negative results (cp. Mk. 1:45). Jesus, again, withdraws into prayerful communion with His Father.

6. Healing of Paralytic (5:17-26)

Luke does not tell where this healing took place, but Mt. and Mk. record the same event and note that it was in Capernaum. The area was so crowded that the man who was on a couch or bed or stretcher had to be let down into the one-room house through the roof. Although not all cases of sickness were the result of sin, Jesus obviously saw a connection and thus pronounced forgiveness. After all, whatever the exact nature of the case may have been, "to release a soul from its inner fear and darkness, to give the spiritual power of an inner peace, was more than to give the body the physical strength to walk."²⁵ Furthermore, this "healing of the paralytic reveals that faith expresses itself in diligent trust. That is what the paralytic's friends show and what Jesus commends. This faith is active, going to great lengths to seek Jesus' presence. Such faith catches Jesus' eye and touches God's heart."²⁶ The tense of the verb indicates that "all were amazed" and "went on glorifying God" by recognizing that it was His presence which made this healing occur.

7. Levi's Honoring of Jesus (5:27-32)

The word "publican" in KJV refers to "a tax collector" who became one of the inner circle of Jesus' followers. He was a sinner, personally and professionally, and an outcast as far as the Pharisees were concerned. But Jesus sought sinners and he certainly qualified. In response to the criticism of the Pharisees, Jesus stated clearly that He came calling sinners, not righteous people, to repentance. His ministry was not a reward for righteousness but a gift of grace and mercy. Indeed, "Jesus entered into fellowship, including table fellowship, with those most despised by the Jewish religion of his day. There is little wonder that he was crucified!"²⁷

8. Defense of Disciples (5:33-39)

Another conflict with the Pharisees over *fasting* led to His daring defense of His disciples. Jesus poses a logical question: "Is it morally possible for them to compel the children of the bridechamber (His disciples) to fast while the bridegroom (Jesus Himself) is still with them?"²⁸ The parables of the old/new garment and the old/new wine illustrate his point. The

²⁵Bowie, 106.

²⁶Bock, 166.

²⁷Stagg, 49-50.

²⁸Geldenhuys, 195.

Jewish religious leaders held to the “old is better” syndrome. It is this clogged-up concern and its “insistence which has kept the Jews (then and now) out of the kingdom of Christ.”²⁹

9. Lord of Sabbath Regarding Grain (6:1-5)

This is recorded in Mt and Mk. but this is the shortest of the three accounts. Jesus’ defense of the disciples echoes the truth about David’s action when he was hungry (1 Sam. 21:1-6), even though the shewbread was normally used by the priest. So then, He is pointing out the truth about the nature, purpose, and design of the Sabbath. In Christianity, all days are holy, not just one.

10. Lord of Sabbath Regarding Healing (6:6-11)

Another rebuttal of the Pharisees was over healing. “He condemned a ‘do-nothing sabbath,’ holding that on the sabbath it was lawful to do good, to save life. Not to do good or save life would be to harm or destroy life (6:9). Jesus made unmistakably clear his elevation of man above the sabbath, and because of this the Pharisees began to plot against him (6:11).³⁰ According to Exod. 31:14 and 35:2, “death was the penalty for violating the sabbath law; but there is no evidence that it was enforced in Roman times, and no formal charge of sabbath defilement was ever laid against Jesus.”³¹

11. Choosing of Twelve Apostles (6:12-16)

After having spent the entire night in prayer, Jesus proceeds to choose His immediate disciples whom He also named “apostles” (i.e., sent from Him). They consisted of various features: a tax-collector, a traitor, a renegade, a Zealot, etc. But as Barclay notes, “when men are really Christian the most diverse and divergent types can live at peace together. . . . If we really love Him, we will love one another.”³²

12. Sermon on the Plain/Mount (6:17-49)

The semi-parallel account of this is in Mt. 5-7. The similarities include the word “blessed,” “loving one’s enemies,” and “the parable of the two builders,” etc. Although Matthew’s is longer and was on a mountain, Luke’s term “plain,” or “level place” or “plateau” may have been referring to the top of the mount. Whether they are the same or simply similar, with notable differences, “the concern of both was to present Jesus in terms of his origin, identity, gifts, and demands. Maintaining the exact sequence or order of

²⁹Childers, 477.

³⁰Stagg, 52.

³¹Gilmour, 113.

³²75.

events and sayings was not essential to their purpose.”³³

It is worth noting, however, that Luke’s addition in verses 24-26 consists of “a series of woes which follow the beatitudes. It is both interesting and significant that these four woes are the exact antithesis of the four beatitudes. [Plus] verse 38 is not found in Matthew’s version nor is verse 40.”³⁴ The word “good” is also used in relation to “tree” (v. 43), “fruit” (v. 43), “man” (v. 45) and “treasure” (v. 45) concerning kingdom *kind-of-people*.

13. Healing of Centurion’s Servant at Capernaum (7:1-10)

In the NT, a centurion was basically regarded as “a genial and open-hearted type of character – cp. 23:47; Acts 10:22; 22:26; 27:43.”³⁵ The confession of his unworthiness (v. 6) and humility was dotted with a “faith” which Jesus found impressionable, lacking even in Israel. Jesus’ mere “word” was sufficient for healing his servant, and indeed, it was.

14. Raising of Widow’s Son at Nain (7:11-17)

Jesus’s ability to conquer disease and not be limited by distance, is now displayed in His ability to conquer death. This daunting event, quite understandably, resulted in awe and the recognition of God’s presence (“glory”) in Jesus. He was, indeed, “a great prophet” who “imparts to men divine gifts and lessons.”³⁶ He was “a great prophet who had vindicated his claims by raising the dead.”³⁷ Again, “Jesus showed himself indifferent to his own security and concerned only for other people.”³⁸

15. John the Baptist (7:18-35)

“There is nothing improbable in the idea that the soul of Christ’s forerunner had its time of impatience or even great perplexity.”³⁹ After all, Peter had his moments of wonderment, as did others, likely based on the mistaken circulating ideas about the character and actions of the Messiah/Christ. The answer Jesus’ provided was based in the words and works of wonders He performed. “In these words Jesus warns John not to reject or condemn Him because of the wrong idea concerning what He has to do and concerning the kind of methods He should adopt in His work. He is the Divine Messiah who does the right things in the right way and at the right time. In this pronouncement Jesus lays claim in a most unmistakable manner to absolute

³³Stagg, 55-56.

³⁴Childers, 47

³⁵Ross, 182-183.

³⁶Bengel, 423.

³⁷Vincent, 324.

³⁸Stagg, 62.

³⁹Ross, 195.

divinity.”⁴⁰ With a series of burning questions, Jesus spoke to the crowd about John. Indeed, “one can scarcely imagine terms of higher praise than are used in vss. 26-28a. . . . Words such as these on Jesus’ lips mean that John was a man of altogether extraordinary moral stature.”⁴¹ Luke notes (v. 29-30) that “God’s plan was just.”⁴² That is, the people (including publicans) “declaring, by being baptized, that God’s will concerning John’s baptism was right.”⁴³ By their refusal to join in with the same declaration of truth, the Pharisees and the interpreters and doctors of the Mosaic law persisted in their disobedience to the truth. Therefore, Jesus compared those who rejected the purpose of God to “**children** who cannot agree on a game to play. One group wishes to play ‘weddings,’ the other ‘funerals,’ and neither proposal is mutually acceptable.”⁴⁴ V. 35 clinches the case: “Those who belong to God, who possess the true **wisdom**, will recognize his truth under various forms and will respond to it gladly, just as others will reject it no matter what the form may be.”⁴⁵

16. Anointing of Jesus’ Feet by Sinful Woman (7:36-50)

In somewhat shocking and startling contrast to the Pharisee Simon who had invited Jesus to his house for a meal, a sinful woman (likely a prostitute) in the city heard of Jesus’ presence there and apparently invited herself in the house. She had obviously met Jesus earlier and had been forgiven by Him, so, “she came expressing in a highly emotional way her gratitude for having been forgiven by Jesus.”⁴⁶ “Her sins were forgiven as shown by her love, but, as in Simon’s case, little appreciation for forgiveness is accomplished by little love.”⁴⁷ This woman performed the most humiliating and servant-oriented role of rubbing His feet “with the most expensive and precious thing she possessed.”⁴⁸ With a keen sense of awareness as to what Simon was thinking – perhaps by his body language without speaking a word – Jesus’ commended her actions with an unmistakable parable. This cornered Simon from escape as to Jesus’ meaning. He and his fellow Pharisees “fell into the ageless trap of the devil of ‘measuring themselves by one another,’ and comparing themselves with one another.”⁴⁹ Even though her sins had previously been forgiven, her reputation still lingered among the Pharisees. So, Jesus “openly declares that her sins *are* forgiven.”⁵⁰ Rather than being shamed

⁴⁰Geldenhuys, 226-227.

⁴¹Bowie, etc., 137.

⁴²Gilmour, 139.

⁴³Vincent, 326.

⁴⁴Gilmour, 140.

⁴⁵Bowie, 141.

⁴⁶Butler, 130.

⁴⁷Applebury, 134.

⁴⁸Butler, 130.

⁴⁹Ibid, 131.

⁵⁰Geldenhuys, 234.

or reproached by the self-righteous ones, Jesus reminds her that it was her faith that saved her – rescued and delivered from sin’s “guilt, curse, penalty, judgment, death, and damnation,”⁵¹ and to depart in “peace” from this place of the condemned Pharisee.

17. Tour of Galilee (8:1-3)

This is a summary sketch of His activity, with His twelve disciples, in every city and village in Galilee as far as proclaiming the kingdom of God was concerned. Several women who had been healed of various diseases provided assistance to them during their campaign. Women in the contemporary NT world were not esteemed very highly, in fact, not at all. It was common among the Persians, Greeks and Jews that a man would “give thanks that he is not an unbeliever or uncivilized, that he is not a woman and that he is not a slave.”⁵² This ideology sprang from the viewpoint of women in the OT – “woman was legally more a chattel than a person in Israel”⁵³ – and in Judaism – “Conversation should not be held with a woman (cf. Jn. 4:9, 27), even though she be one’s own. ‘May the words of the Torah be burned, they should not be handed over to women.’”⁵⁴ So, it is against this background “that one can appreciate what Jesus did for women when he accepted them as persons with identity and dignity.”⁵⁵

18. Parable (8:4-18)

Here the emphasis is not on how the Word of God is sown but on how it is heard or received. It has been called the parable of the hard-of-hearing. There are four types of hearers: (a) Lighthearted or the roadside, wayside type in which the Word is taken away, rather than, taken in. In other words, “they part from the faith which they have never understood and never loved.”⁵⁶ (b) Fainthearted or the shallow type in which the Word is apparently received with joy and gratification but “then the restlessness which will not stand by any real test of endurance.”⁵⁷ (c) Half-hearted or the thorny-ground type in which the Word is heard but the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and pleasures for other things choke or strangle the Word so that there is no room for growth. (d) Wholehearted or the good type hearer which obeys the Word and brings forth fruit with patience “in contrast with *fall away*, ver. 13.”⁵⁸ The first three types indicate “that some were hostile or indifferent to

⁵¹Lenski, 437.

⁵²Oepke, 777.

⁵³Ibid, 781.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Stagg, 63.

⁵⁶Ross, 212.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Vincent, 331.

His teaching. . . . The kingdom of God is within human life as vitality is in the seed. Given any reasonable chance, it will grow! . . . It is not a parable of the Sower, nor of the Seed, but rather a Parable of the Soils. . . . It is about the soil of human understanding and response into which the teaching falls.”⁵⁹ No wonder the warning about *hearing*!

19. Jesus’ Mother and Brothers (8:19-21)

Without rejecting or downplaying His own immediate family, “Jesus makes their coming the occasion for a remark about his larger, more inclusive family.”⁶⁰ Indeed, that which unites people in/into the family of God is not genetics or the familial blood line of universal sinners. It is God Himself Who does so through the faultless blood line of the Ultimate Sacrifice. Having just completed His discourse on the various types of *hearing* in response to the Word of God, He now declares that those in His spiritual family are those who not only “hear” but also “do” or “practice” what that Word says – the wholehearted hearers!

20. Calming of Sea (8:22-25)

This miraculous maneuver by Jesus in the middle of nature’s mind-blowing event depicts “Jesus’ confident trust in God as a time of crisis [which] calmed his disciples’ fears, and their escape from the perils of the tempest.”⁶¹ In Ps. 104:3; 107:23-30, the OT clearly identifies that is God Who has authority over nature. Here, “Luke purposefully wants the question of Jesus’ identity and uniqueness to be kept before his reader. The disciples are beginning to appreciate just how unique he is.”⁶²

21. Healing of Demoniac (8:26-39)

Jesus and the early Christians collectively “regarded demons as very real and very powerful adversaries of man.”⁶³ From an overall NT perspective, the symptoms of demon possession included: “(1) insane raving; (2) self-destructive behavior; (3) the antisocial behavior of nudity; (4) seizures; (5) dumbness; (6) deafness; (7) blindness; (8) performance of the involuntary function of spirit mediumship.”⁶⁴ “Satan, when he can, renders man so wretched as even to neglect natural propriety. God loves order, propriety, fitness. Christ’s power extends over animals, demons, and the deep; and this the demons acknowledge.”⁶⁵ This healing of the man

⁵⁹ Buttrick, xx, 18, 41-42.

⁶⁰ Bowie, 153.

⁶¹ Gilmour, 154.

⁶² Bock, 237.

⁶³ Aune, 922.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Bengel, 431.

from many demons adds to the astounding nature of Jesus's activity. Since swine were "an illegal possession for Jews, their destruction through the permission of Jesus was, therefore, the execution of God's law. . . . The fact that these devils destroyed the swine is also only in harmony with their nature. . . . This man's story was to stir the hearts of all who heard it to find out more about Jesus. . . . When Luke writes that he told 'what things Jesus did for him,' this does not intend to substitute 'Jesus' for "God' or to identify the two. The man felt that in praising Jesus he was truly praising God."⁶⁶

22. Healing of Jairus' Daughter and the Hemorrhaging Woman (8:40-56)

As a pragmatic physician and a skillful scriptural surgeon, Luke ties together two females over the number twelve: the daughter being twelve years old and the woman with a hemorrhage for twelve years. Luke does this to heighten "the dramatic effect of the framework narrative, and in this instance the second episode occupies Jesus' attention during the necessary interval between his interview with Jairus and the arrival of the messenger from the ruler's house."⁶⁷ The woman's hopelessness with healing from others is dramatically offset by Jesus in one moment, as was Jairus' daughter. To be on the verge of fear is to be vacated in the presence of Jesus. "Here is the logic of faith: if we trust at all we must trust to the uttermost. Faith in man may properly be partial; faith in God, however shaky it may be on occasions, is by definition all-inclusive. Either we do not trust God and have nothing; or we do trust him and possess all things."⁶⁸

23. Tour of Galilee and Sending Forth of the Twelve (9:1-6)

Having been sent out by Him, the twelve disciples have now become Apostles ("sent out from"). Ross⁶⁹ notes that Jesus shared them with three things by which He Himself ministered: "(a) detachment from physical needs; (b) adequacy to meet human sickness/illnesses and needs – *they could do what they could not do before because He enabled them to do it*; (c) the *solemn urgency* of the hour – messengers of Destiny: men must choose for themselves whether they would hear or disobey, but the messengers, like their Master, must discharge their responsibility." They were to accept hospitality in fulfilling their mission and not waste time with those who refused their message. Shaking off the dust from their feet was the way to show that they had no part in the kingdom of God. As Gilmour observes, Jesus' "instructions reflect the apocalyptic atmosphere of early Christianity – the imminence of the kingdom and the need for haste in

⁶⁶Lenski, 475, 480.

⁶⁷Gilmour, 160.

⁶⁸Bowie, 163.

⁶⁹238-240.

preaching the gospel.”⁷⁰

24. Herod (9:7-9)

Jesus’ fame had spread far and wide in Galilee (where Herod ruled). Herod was perplexed about all the things he was hearing about Jesus and from others as to who He might really be. Speculations abounded: John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the other OT prophets who had been raised from the dead. “Herod’s perplexity indicates how even in the highest social circles people struggled to understand Jesus.”⁷¹ Bock adds, “Herod appears interested in Jesus only as a matter of curiosity. He longs to see him, but only because he has heard so much about him. This is not the best way to approach Jesus. His ministry is not a matter of popular, sociological inquiry, as if he were a figure in *People* magazine. Rather, one should take seriously the claim that he has been sent from God as the Messiah and that he shows us the way to God (9:18-20). Herod pictures a figure who almost tragically trivializes Jesus and his ministry.”⁷²

25. Feeding of 5,000 (9:10-17)

In order to escape the pressures of the crowd, Jesus and His disciples withdrew to the city of Bethsaida at the north end of the sea of Galilee. The crowds followed Him, however, and despite the desire and need to be alone, Jesus welcomed them. He continued speaking about the kingdom of God and healing those in need. At the end of the day, He instructed His disciples to group the people into companies of 50 each. He blessed the five loaves and two fish and fed the 5,000 men. All were satisfied and the twelve left overs apparently fed Himself and His disciples. This episode is recorded in all four gospel narratives (Mt. 14:13-23; Mk. 6: 30-46; Jn. 6:1-15), indicating its superlative importance for His followers. The miracle had both literal and symbolic meaning. They had more at the end than they had at the beginning. Plus, Jesus enabled them to do more than they thought they could do – because He was working through them. This ideology permeates the essence of the Christian faith.

III PROFILES on Jesus (9:18-21:4)

A. Instructions from Jesus (9:18-19:27)

1. Confession of Christ (9:18-21)

While praying, Jesus asked His disciples about His identity and reputation

⁷⁰165.

⁷¹Bock, 252.

⁷²Ibid, 255.

among the people. The replies ranged from John the Baptist to one of the old prophets. Peter's confession, "The Christ of God," means that He was the true Messiah Who was promised to the patriarchs. However, "the *full* knowledge, in the sense of really understanding, that He was the Son of the Living God, came to the disciples only after the Resurrection . . . designating both His Office and His Nature."⁷³ Bruce notes, "Peter speaks the language of the apostolic age, *the Christ of God*, a commonplace of the Christian faith."⁷⁴ It would have been easy for Peter and the other disciples to then "have gone about with an expression of their earnest conviction that the great Prophet was indeed the long looked-for King Messiah, and to have raised the excitable crowds to any wild pitch of enthusiasm."⁷⁵ But that was not the type response He desired. Mere enthusiasm without any solid foundation as to the type foundation upon which the Christian faith was to be built would have quickly fizzled out. He explains more precisely in the following verse why He refused superficial emotionalism. What He will do will not be achieved through emotional attachments – which wax and wane – but through His death and resurrection. As Tolbert points out, this much misunderstood passage "signifies the necessity of divine purpose and control. The path of suffering is not an optional one. It has been marked out by God. Any other way, e.g., the way of a nationalistic messianic movement, would be satanic."⁷⁶

2. The Cost of Discipleship (9:23-27)

Another reason why mere emotional attachments are resisted and deemed insufficient within themselves is due to the cost of discipleship. A disciple is more than simply a learner, as was seen among Greek philosophers and their students. Just as Jesus was destined for rejection and death, the disciples of Jesus must be prepared to follow in His steps. There must be no claims for self-preservation. There must be an abandonment of "personal ambitions for prominence and power."⁷⁷ Instead, "the demand of Jesus is equivalent to a man's putting of the hangman's rope about his neck. Thus only can the disciple follow Christ, for the path which he treads is the path of martyrdom."⁷⁸ This pathway is more important than gaining possession of the whole world and all its attractions. The words, "taste of death" occur in the NT only here and Heb. 2:9. Vincent notes that "Chrysostom compares Christ to a physician who first tastes his medicines to encourage the sick to take them."⁷⁹ Bruce suggests that "the kingdom of God" here refers to "the origination

⁷³Edersheim, 80.

⁷⁴Bruce, 530.

⁷⁵Spence, 236.

⁷⁶82.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Manson, 110-111.

⁷⁹343.

of the church at Pentecost.”⁸⁰ Geldenhuys states it refers to “the destruction of Jerusalem and the downfall of the Jewish national existence in Palestine in A.D. 70.”⁸¹ Spence prefers “after the Resurrection [when they] not only looked on God, but grasped the meaning of the presence and work of God on earth. The secret of the strange resistless power of these men in a hostile world was that their eyes had gazed on some of the sublime glories, and their ears had heard some of the tremendous secrets of *the kingdom of God*.”⁸² Manson offers reference to his second coming : Jesus “expected the supernatural kingdom of God to become a fact, or, if death came before his work was finished, he expected to come again from God, in terms of the prophecy in Daniel, to bring about its accomplishment.”⁸³ Plummer maintains this is possible “only so far as the destruction of Jerusalem was a type of the end of the world.”⁸⁴

3. Transfiguration (9:28-36)

This is not “a cleverly fabricated tale but the testimony of an eyewitness of the majesty of Jesus Christ.”⁸⁵ The purpose of this unique manifestation is that “the representatives [Moses and Elijah] of the Ancient Covenant come in order to consecrate the Messiah for death.”⁸⁶ Peter, as usual, stumbles over the greatness of the scene. His desire to build three tabernacles was to make Jesus equal to Moses (the law) and Elijah (the prophets). Regardless of how great these two men were, this exaltation of Jesus establishes the fact that He was greater than the greatest of them. They pass away but He does not. “Their light goes down, His sun shines continuously.”⁸⁷ Therefore, “hear Him,” not “them.” It also provides “new proof of His sinlessness and of His being well pleasing to God.”⁸⁸ This should “arrest the creeping carnality of the disciples.”⁸⁹

4. Healing of Demoniac (9:37-43)

While the Transfiguration took place at night, this event occurred on the next day. A father seeks healing for his son⁹⁰ and is disappointed that the disciples could not do it. Plummer suggests that “the disciples who failed here need not be the Apostles, who were charged to cast out demons (ver.

⁸⁰531; Applebury, 167.

⁸¹277, which see for convincing elaboration; Butler, 170; Plummer, 249-250; Alford, 367.

⁸²238.

⁸³111.

⁸⁴250.

⁸⁵Applebury, 108.

⁸⁶Oosterize, 154.

⁸⁷Ibid, 155.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Butler, 172.

⁹⁰Tolbert suggests that the boy was “subject to epileptic seizures” (85).

1). If they were, this one failure was exceptional (Mk. 6:12-13).”⁹¹ Jesus addressed the father and the multitudes. This demonic-dashing of the boy to the ground was short-lived, for Jesus rebuked the demon, healed the boy, and delivered him back to his father. The word translated “mighty power” (*megaleiotes*) occurs nowhere else in the four gospel accounts, and occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Acts 19:27 (“magnificence”) and 2 Pt. 1:16 (“majesty”).

5. Prediction of Death & Resurrection (9:43-45)

Jesus speaks a second time (9:22) of His imminent death. “His aim was to keep the disciples from being misled by it.”⁹² Spence states that this mention of His death was “so utterly distasteful, perhaps inconceivable . . . that they dreaded asking him any questions about this dark future of suffering which he said lay before him.”⁹³

6. Childlikeness (9:46-48)

V. 46 reveals just “how *selfishly ambitious* the disciples could sometimes be. . . . Yet we are almost grateful to the disciples for their fault . . . since one more the blemish in the disciples serve as a foil to the glory of the Master.”⁹⁴ “Stature is not a matter of popular perception but of simply being human. Even a normally disregarded child has stature. To make the least the greatest is to make all great. There are no unimportant people.”⁹⁵

7. Discipleship (9:49-50)

The pathways of discipleship were greatly misunderstood then, and continue so to be now. John had rebuked someone for not following them. The “preoccupation of the disciples with greatness indicated that they did not understand the nature of the king or his kingdom.”⁹⁶

As Robertson notes, “John expected to be promoted for extra zeal in orthodoxy! Here we have a needed lesson in tolerance about methods of work for Christ. How little John here understood the spirit of Jesus. But Christ was patient with the narrowness of John as he is today with ours. What poor earthen vessels we are after all, with our bickerings, jealousies, and prejudices. The wonder is that Jesus can use any of us in his service. We preach the spirit of service for other people and practice too often self-aggrandizement and self-seeking. It was pitiable then and it is lamenta-

⁹¹254.

⁹²Bruce, 533.

⁹³242.

⁹⁴Ross, 267.

⁹⁵Bock, 278.

⁹⁶Robbins, 107.

ble now.”⁹⁷ Jesus, in turned, rebuke John. Nevertheless, “through the centuries some Christian groups have turned this around to say: ‘He who is not following with us is against us.’”⁹⁸ Yes, pitiable and lamentable!

The Journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19-27)

8. Through Samaria to Jerusalem (9:51-56)

It is some tantalizing that instead of referring to the cross and the grave, Luke speaks already of the ascension, “that he should be receive up”: that is, “the glorious goal alone.”⁹⁹ Since they were going into uncharted territory, He sent messengers ahead to prepare for His visit. As Childers notes: “The Samaritans were half-breeds in race and semi-pagans in religion. When the Assyrians conquered Israel (the ten tribes) they carried away captive many of the Israelites and brought back pagans from the East to fill their places in Palestine. Thus the race became mixed, and in process of time the religion also became a hybrid with a rival temple and a claim that Mount Gerizim was the proper place to worship (2 Kgs. 17:24-34). The intense rivalry between Samaria and Judea began in the division of Solomon’s kingdom, and was intensified after the mixing of the race by the Assyrians – especially as a result of the conflict between Sanballat and the Jews at the return from the Babylonian captivity (Neh. 4:1-2). In Jesus’ time the Jews hated the Samaritans and considered them to be on a level with dogs; the Samaritans reciprocated in kind, so that Jews had two reasons for avoiding Samaritans: hatred and fear.”¹⁰⁰ The fiery dispositions of James and John to “command fire to come down from heaven and consume them,” was quiet common but most corrupt. It led to Jesus’ rebuke. Bengel notes: “Christ wrought miracles in all the elements except fire. Fire was reserved for the end of the world.”¹⁰¹

9. Discipleship (9:57-62)

A commitment is shallow when it is prompted or motivated by selfish motive or self-seeking accolades. No earthly gain is in the ingredients for Christian discipleship. “This man volunteered his service to the Master but wanted to postpone his religious duties until his social obligations had been performed.”¹⁰² Such is a recipe for rejection and ruin. Such a response is indicated of those hearers who are only lighthearted, faint-hearted, or halfhearted. Discipleship is a deliverance from self-seeking accolades and involves “a surrender so absolute that no other authority

⁹⁷Robertson, 115-116.

⁹⁸Tolbert, 87.

⁹⁹Spence, 245.

¹⁰⁰495.

¹⁰¹436.

¹⁰²Childers, 496.

dared bid them halt upon their way.”¹⁰³ In the words of the song, “no turning back, no turning back.”

10. Appointment of Labourers (10:1-24)

Tolbert recommends a four-fold format for these verses:

(1) Instructions to the Seventy (10:1-12)

(2) Consequences of Rejection (10:13-16)

(3) The Return of the Seventy (10:17-20)

(4) The Rejoicing of Jesus (10:21-24).¹⁰⁴

(1) Instructions to the Seventy (10:1-12) – Their mission was to unfold in pairs (10:1), prayers (10:2), prohibitions (10:3-4), peace (10:5-6), practicalities (10:7-11), and paradigm (10:12)

(2) Consequences of Rejection (10:13-16) – Their mission was one of utterly negative pronouncements upon those who rejected their mission.

(3) The Return of the Seventy (10:17-20) – Their mission was completed in such a manner that their partnership with Jesus was celebrated. But it was not to be done in the spirit of pride for what was accomplished but in the possession of their names being written in heaven. Indeed, “such assurance raises the humblest saint to a position of honor and joy above that of the most talented, successful, and honored servant.”¹⁰⁵

(4) The Rejoicing of Jesus (10:21-24) – Their mission led to prayerful praise to God. “He could not but rejoice when He saw how eager hearts were entering into His Kingdom, and tasting the joy of its service.”¹⁰⁶ Having directed His prayerful praise to the Father, Jesus “now directs his discourse to the disciples apart.”¹⁰⁷ Jesus “would not let His immediate circle escape from the glory and privilege which surrounded them in that time of visitation. . . . He would have His disciples see, in the light of that long expectation, into how great a heritage they had entered.”¹⁰⁸

11. The Good Samaritan (10:25-37)

This is another jab at Jesus in an effort to jerk Him into a legal controversy over the way to eternal life. By referring to the law of love, the controversialist backed himself into a corner from which there was no retreat. Simple kindness to the needy was the catchline as to the practical mean-

¹⁰³Ross, 282.

¹⁰⁴89-92.

¹⁰⁵Bliss, 185.

¹⁰⁶Ross, 294.

¹⁰⁷Bengel, 441.

¹⁰⁸Ross, 296.

ing of love: i.e., eternal life in action. An enemy to the Jews became the example of love in action. Ross notes that such love “is a picture of *catholic* [universal] charity, which forgets boundaries of race and creed and politics, and looks only on men as men. . . . a picture of *self-forgetful* charity which ignores the instinct of self-preservation . . . a picture of a *thorough* charity, which is not satisfied to give a momentary gift but sees the thing through to the end.”¹⁰⁹

12. Jesus’ Visit with Martha and Mary (10:38-42)

Barclay calls this section “The Class of Temperaments.”¹¹⁰ He is, indeed, correct in his assessments, including the need for much more awareness and understanding of the various temperaments or personality styles which exist among human beings. According to v. 39, the moment Jesus indicated He was about to speak, Mary turned aside from everything else to sit at Jesus’ feet and absorb what all He had to say. Martha, on the other hand (v.40), points out to Jesus that she strongly disapproved of Mary’s actions. In her eagerness to serve mere human food to Jesus, Martha is extremely bothered that she had to do it by herself. Jesus quickly points out that Mary was thinking like He was thinking. *Devotion* is at the core of Christianity. Jesus would not support Martha’s position of drawing Mary away to do things which were less important. It is likely more common than many realize: devoted to “many things” rather than “the one thing that is needful.” Indeed, Mary did Him “all highest honour . . . Her homage consisted in forgetting all else but Him, Who spake as none had ever done. As truest courtesy or affection consists, nor in its demonstrations, but in being so absorbed in the object of it as to forget its demonstration, so with Mary in the Presence of Christ.”¹¹¹

13. Prayer (11:1-13)

In response to the request to teach the disciples how to pray, Jesus sets forth a model or paradigm of the central ingredients of prayer. Luke’s account is simpler than the one in Matthew 6:9-13 yet houses the same basic components: (1) address God as the “Heavenly Father” with the focus that His will (“kingdom”) be done on earth, just like it is in heaven; (2) for daily needs; (3) a willingness to both give and receive forgiveness; (4) deliverance from the threats of temptations and trials. This model is illustrated by a friend’s request for something to eat at the midnight hour. “The three repetitions of the command are more than mere repetitions: since to seek is more than to ask, and to know more than to seek.”¹¹² Persistence pays off for both the friend and for God the Father. The response of the human

¹⁰⁹302-303.

¹¹⁰141-142.

¹¹¹Edersheim, 147; Book IV, Ch. V.

¹¹²Trench, 269.

father in response to the request of his son further illustrates the point. Of all the gifts from the Father, none are more important than the gift of the Holy Spirit. As Bengel exclaims, the Holy Spirit is “the *best* gift of all. . . . The Holy Spirit Himself works in man the first desire for Himself. He is moreover more necessary to the soul than food is for the body.”¹¹³ Bliss notes this model prayer “shows us a scheme of petitions comprehending everything, which we may offer to our Heavenly Father, with the fullest assurance that he cannot help granting us these or what we might prefer, if we so pray.”¹¹⁴

14. Beelzebub Accusation (11:14-28)

Sensing that His enemies had been foiled by the positive reaction from the crowd over His casting out a demon, He heard some say that His ability to do this was His being in league with the chief of the demons. Others sought for a sign from heaven – which was staring them in the face but they refused to see it. But as Barclay notes, “it is by no means uncommon for people to resort to slander when honest opposition is helpless.”¹¹⁵ His rational exploration of their accusation exposes the irrationality of their thinking. If He was guilty of their charge then the demonic forces of evil would be “embroiled in a self-destructive civil war.”¹¹⁶ Furthermore, their sons were engaged in casting out demons and only biased, prejudicial, irrational people would attribute similar actions to them being in league with the chief of the demons. One cannot be true and the other false. In essence, Jesus is saying that there can be no neutrality in the warfare with wickedness. So, either lead, follow, or get out of the way! It is impossible to straddle the fence. Plus, to be delivered from the negative forces of evil must be matched by positive functions in the forces of righteousness or that deliverance will be constituted as basically worthless. There can be no emptiness or vacuum or idleness. Jesus’ subsequent comments to the interruption of a woman’s praise of His mother is “whatever can be said for the blessedness of Mary as Jesus’ mother, it is far more blessed to hear His words and to order one’s life in accord with them.”¹¹⁷

15. Sign of Jonah (11:29-32)

Still striving for sensationalism from Jesus, their demand for another show-time demonstration “implies that nothing which Jesus had done constituted in the popular view a satisfactory proof of the religious

¹¹³447.

¹¹⁴199.

¹¹⁵148.

¹¹⁶Tolbert, 99.

¹¹⁷Childers, 511.

authority which he claimed.”¹¹⁸ Jesus declares their blindness to facts. The sign which is significant enough for Him, and should be for them, is the sign of Jonah: i.e., as he preached repentance to the Ninevites, so, Jesus is preaching repentance to the nation of Israel. The Ninevites repented but the Israelites do not. Their indifference to God’s revelation in Jesus is further exploded by the fact that the Queen of the south – [Sheba in 1 Kings 10:1-10; she gained wisdom from Solomon, and apparently acted accordingly] – will rise up in judgment against them for Jesus is greater than Jonah and Solomon. Indeed, “there is no hope for Israelites who reject the claims of God represented by Jesus.”¹¹⁹

16. Light (11:33-36)

The reference to lighting a lamp first appeared in 8:16, and the lamp of the body here refers to a person’s ability to see, discover, or discern the truth in Jesus. A healthy eyes sees reality but an unhealthy eye experiences blurred vision and/or is blinded. Jesus warns them against trifling with truth. “The point of the whole section is that men have received in Jesus all the sign which they ought to expect. If they do not recognize the sign, it is because of the shutting of their eyes.”¹²⁰ They need *sight* for the *light* that is shining before them. As Robertson notes, “it is a pitiful situation if the very light is darkness.”¹²¹ Indeed, “those who close their eyes remain in darkness, however great the light about them. This is the thrust of this section: God’s giving and man’s rejecting; the coming of the kingdom of God and man’s resistance to it; God’s evident presence, yet man’s demand for more evidence.”¹²²

17. Woes on Pharisees (11:37-54)

In vss. 37-44, Jesus exposes the hypocrisy of the Pharisees exhibited in their love for outward appearances, yet inward corruptions. Indeed, their hypocrisy “rests on appearances, on superficial judgments, on a forgetfulness that God searcheth the heart.”¹²³ They were mesmerized with legal practices. They interpreted the law in ways which pleased themselves, despite their misinterpretations of its primary purpose and meaning. They were murderers of the prophets, yet built sepulchers for them for the sake of their fathers. “In other words, you pretend to make amends for the crimes of past generations by this show of ostentatious piety.”¹²⁴ The blood of Abel was the first blood shed in the OT (Gen. 4:10) and

¹¹⁸ Manson, 142.

¹¹⁹ Tolbert, 101.

¹²⁰ Manson, 145.

¹²¹ 164.

¹²² Stagg, 83.

¹²³ Edgar, 330.

¹²⁴ Spence, 308.

the last was Zacharias (2 Chron. 24:22). Jesus paints “the most pitiful picture imaginable of blind ecclesiastics trying to keep others as blind as they were, blind leaders of the blind, both falling into the pit.”¹²⁵ The closing words reveal the “rage of the rabbis toward Jesus.”¹²⁶

18. Fear God (12:1-7)

Jesus’ warning about the leaven of the Pharisees is defined as “hypocrisy.” To whatever extent they spoke of or about the Mosaic law, “it had been disfigured by the spirit of the sect.”¹²⁷ Jesus exposes the fact that their hypocrisy is actually barren or useless because truth sooner or later always becomes evident. The wisest course of action is not to be fearful of them and their cloudy contradictions of clear truth but to be fearful of God Who has not only the ability to kill but also to cast into hell. After all, people’s worth is greater in value than many sparrows, even though God does not forget even them. After all, “after what we have learnt about molecules and atoms, a sparrow is immense and a hair on the head is a huge thing to the microscope.”¹²⁸ So, what may be “regarded among men as almost worthless is with God in heaven not forgotten.”¹²⁹ Indeed, this reverential awe of God and the experience of His presence brings “incredible comfort.”¹³⁰

19. Confession of Christ (12:8-12)

To confess Christ before men is to be aligned with Him in public profession and practice – no hypocrisy involved. Their afflictions or sufferings in His service would not be forgotten before the angels of God in heaven. And, as “splendid as would the recompense be to the faithful and loyal, equally shameful would be the recompense meted out to the cowardly and faint-hearted.”¹³¹ This ideology is further reinforced in vs. 11-12: “There is nothing to fear in persecution, because the Holy Spirit will teach his people what to say before the synagogues, rules, and authorities. Their message will be his message. If they reject them, they reject Jesus, but he will serve as the source of strength and wisdom for his people. Thus, by fearing God, disciples have nothing to fear from people.”¹³²

¹²⁵Robertson, 169.

¹²⁶Ibid, 170.

¹²⁷Oosterzee, 196.

¹²⁸Ross, 24.

¹²⁹Oosterzee, 197.

¹³⁰Bock, 337.

¹³¹Spence, 332.

¹³²Bock, 338.

20. Parable of Rich Fool (12:13-21)

The judgment of God not only falls upon the hypocrisy of the Pharisees but also upon the avarice [“too great a desire to acquire money or property; greed for wealth”] among any. A rich man may actually be poor in the sight of God and a poor man may actually be rich in the sight of God. “If riches fall to anyone, let him not set his heart thereon. Even earthly blessings may become a snare. The rich man’s self-enjoyment of life in its full beggarliness [is a realistic ocymoron]. The mournful fate of the man who gathers treasures for himself and is not rich toward God [is as follows]: (a) painful discontent; (b) increasing anxiety; (c) delusive hope; (d) irreparable loss.”¹³³ Indeed, “there is more to life than a material inheritance; life is not made up of possessing things. This life is temporary; the eternal inheritance is infinitely more important. To illustrate His point, Jesus told about the man God called a fool.”¹³⁴ Barclay notes that “the Romans had a proverb which said that money was like sea-water; the more a man drank the thirstier he became. And as long as a man’s attitude is that of the rich fool his desire will always be to get more – and that is the reverse of the Christian way.”¹³⁵

21. Worry (12:22-34)

The verb translated “take no thought” (*merimnao* – KJV) means “to be drawn in different directions; distraction.”¹³⁶ This is a form of *anxiety* in which a person is like an emotional roller-coaster because there are convoluted convictions, divided loyalties, cognitive distortions, and aimless goals. So, this is an “exhortation to freedom from care”¹³⁷ for His disciples. This is not a license for financial dereliction, laziness, or irresponsible care for material possessions. “But the lust for accumulating things which would distract the believer’s mind and heart from his first priority – the revealed will of God – is the ‘anxiety’ Jesus forbids.”¹³⁸ The overarching aim of this section is *faithfulness* without unnecessary attractions and unworthy ambitions and actions which may run counter to God’s rule/reign in one’s life (“the kingdom of God”). When Christians prioritize this aim, “God promises to make possible all the physical necessities for such seeking. The cure for anxiety is simply – believe God keeps His promises!”¹³⁹

¹³³Oosterzee, 200.

¹³⁴Applebury, 215.

¹³⁵164-165.

¹³⁶Thayer, 400.

¹³⁷Robertson, 176.

¹³⁸Butler, 268.

¹³⁹Ibid, 269.

22. Watchfulness (12:35-48)

Since the time of Christ's return is unknown and unknowable, wise ones will be engaged in watchfulness rather than wasteful wondering and spiritual witchhunts. It would be unwise to think that while the Master is away, I may do as I please; after all, life is a series of secular and sacred deposits and situation ethics calls for making the most of the opportunity at hand – *as I see fit*. It would also be unwise to think that while the Master is away, the delay in His return means that I have plenty of time, so eat, drink, be merry, and I may get things in order at the last moment. But as Barclay reminds us, “one of the most dangerous days in a man's life is when he discovers the word ‘to-morrow.’”¹⁴⁰ Decisions have consequences. “Responsibility is measured by opportunity. The more one is given, the more is required of him. . . . judgment falls more heavily on some than upon others, determined by one's degree of privilege or opportunity.”¹⁴¹

23. Division (12:49-53)

The “baptism” Jesus referenced was not His water baptism by John but His “undergoing” conflicts with the religious leaders, rejection by His own people, and His subsequent death. His arrival and mission would lead to the fiery division of families and separation between ordinarily “cherished family ties”¹⁴² As Robertson notes, “peace at any price is not the purpose of Christ . . . loyalty to Christ counts more than all else.”¹⁴³

24. Seriousness of the Times (12:54-59)

People should see what is before their eyes: Judgment is coming, and it is “coming more plainly than rain from the west or heat from the south!”¹⁴⁴ But as history has revealed again and again, those who do not “see the imminence of judgment were not likely to see the urgency of opportunity.”¹⁴⁵ The people “had listened to him who was speaking to them. He had told them all: no sign of power was wanting to his ministry, and it was just over, and the people had not repented.”¹⁴⁶ As Montefiore observes, “As in an earthly quarrel it is well to be reconciled with your adversary (you being in the wrong) before you enter the court, so, as between you and God, repent before the Judgment comes.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁰168.

¹⁴¹Stagg, 92.

¹⁴²Ibid, 93.

¹⁴³183.

¹⁴⁴Ross, 64.

¹⁴⁵Ibid, 65.

¹⁴⁶Spence, 340.

¹⁴⁷498.

25. Urgency of Fruitful Repentance (13:1-5)

“The Galilean zealots were notoriously turbulent and Pilate was ruthlessly cruel. Many massacres marked his administration.”¹⁴⁸ The current thinking among the people was that calamities were a sign of sinfulness. Jesus rejects this idea. He deposits that all are guilty of sin and that unless the Jews repented, they too, in some measure, would perish or “are heading for a disastrous future.”¹⁴⁹ This future came to pass “at the siege and destruction of the city [Jerusalem].”¹⁵⁰

26. Fruitless Fig Tree (13:6-9)

This parable also stresses the urgency of fruitful repentance. The purpose of a fruit tree, of course, is to bear fruit. But for three years, this tree was barren. Despite efforts to properly diagnose and correct the problem, no fruit was ever forthcoming. The barrenness of Israel is the central thrust of this passage (Hos. 9:10). The word “also” in v. 8 “implies recognition on the owner’s part that the barrenness of the fig tree was not the full extent of its unfitness: it ‘nullified’ the soil. It robbed the vines of sunlight and sustenance. On every count it was self-sentenced to destruction.”¹⁵¹ Trench provides another angle: “We may observe, however, that the Lord does not actually affirm that the tree will certainly continue unfruitful to the last, but suggests the other alternative as possible; *‘if it bear fruit, well.’* For thus the door of repentance is left open to all; they are warned that they are not shut up, except indeed by their own evil will, in unbelief and hardness of heart, that it is only themselves who make inevitable their doom.” *Rituals and ceremonies cannot be a substitute for fruitfulness in line with the will of God.* So, this passage shows “that God is patient, but there does come a time when it is too late to repent.”¹⁵²

27. Healing of Crippled Woman on a Sabbath (13:10-17)

Some indignant ruler of the synagogue condemned Jesus for healing a crippled woman on the Sabbath. Jesus, likewise, condemned him for his indifferent, apathetic lack of concern for the woman. The synagogue ruler’s preoccupation with religious ceremonies and duties to the neglect of people’s needs was reprehensible to Jesus. By laying His hands upon her, she was healed instantly; no ceremonial procedures were required. Jesus was the Great Physician who acted “with gentle kindness.”¹⁵³ After all, Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil and this woman’s poor

¹⁴⁸Major, 281.

¹⁴⁹Geldenhuis, 370.

¹⁵⁰Bengel, 459.

¹⁵¹Buttrick, 107-108.

¹⁵²Bock, 371.

¹⁵³Robertson, 188.

health is here attributed straightway to Satan. The adversaries were put to shame and all the others rejoiced over such glorious things!

28. Parables of Mustard Seed and Leaven (13:18-21)

Both parables stress the sharp contrast with a small beginning and a large ending. Although small, the mustard seed will put forth large branches in which birds may make their nests. So, a tiny amount of leaven leads to leavening the entire mass of dough. “With the same compelling certainty that causes a tall shrub to grow out of a minute grain of mustard-seed, or a small piece of leaven to produce a vast mass of dough, will God’s miraculous power cause [the] small band to swell into the mighty host of the people of God in the Messianic Age, embracing the Gentiles.”¹⁵⁴ These “parables of growth, then, are susceptible of a natural interpretation which makes them into a commentary on the actual situation during the ministry of Jesus, in its character as the coming of the Kingdom of God in history.”¹⁵⁵

29. Seriousness of Discipleship (13:22-30)

As Jesus was heading toward Jerusalem, someone asked him if there are only a few that would be saved. Jesus’ response is that many would seek to enter but would not be able to do so. Among the many are those who prefer speculations and controversies about religious matters. Worldly causes deflect people from seeking salvation in Him as the Suffering Servant in preference for a sensational worldly Messiah. But “no matter what self-denial it entails, it is worth all the struggle”¹⁵⁶ to seek Him. Adherence to all the religious ceremonies and rituals required by the Pharisees will not be sufficient in the judgment of God. Indeed, “the bustling Pharisees will find themselves cast out,”¹⁵⁷ and the despised ones from around the world, and outside the confines of the Jewish religion, will be welcomed. As the “first,” the Jews experience rejection, and as the “last,” the Gentiles experience acceptance.

30. Sorrow for Jerusalem (13:31-35)

Despite His knowing the reality of the situation, and precisely because of it, Jesus experienced deep sorrow for Jerusalem. They would have it no other way, and Jesus would not either. The portrait of a hen and her protection of the brood is paralleled in the protection which Jesus offered but was resisted or refused – all due to religious rituals and misinterpretations of the Kingdom of God. It is no wonder that their house was left

¹⁵⁴Jeremias, 149.

¹⁵⁵Dodd, 155.

¹⁵⁶Edgar, 22.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

desolate and the consequences of their murder of the Messiah mushroomed beyond their wildest expectations or imaginations. “How important that we all should accept the proffered protection of the Saviour, and not imitate Jerusalem in her obstinacy and her doom!”¹⁵⁸ It was a *love* which was rejected and resulted in *loss* of immeasurable proportions!

31. Healing on the Sabbath (14:1-6)

Another Sabbath controversy arises over healing. The Jews regarded *healing* as *work*, so, it should not be done on the Sabbath. Jesus maintains that healing on this day would result in praise to God because of the high value which God places on human beings. The Jews would pull an ox out of a pit on the Sabbath and not call it *work*. So, since man is much more important to God than an ox, healing on the Sabbath is allowed. “Healing God’s children is constant with sabbath praise; to fail to heal them would be a breach in worship.”¹⁵⁹ They were stumped into silence.

32. Parable of Humility (14:7-11)

Cp. Prov. 25:6-7 for the background to this parable. The seating arrangements at an Oriental banquet were observed meticulously. Jesus uses this setting for teaching “the humiliation which inevitably overtakes an over-ambitious and self-assertive guest to point the moral that humility alone constitutes worthiness in the eyes of God.”¹⁶⁰

33. The Modified Invitation (14:12-14)

As another angle by which Jesus conveys the universal invitation to the kingdom of God, He employs a host who normally would invite friends, equals, and other respectable people to his feast, but who Jesus suggests should invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; that is, people who cannot return the favor and “from whom the proud and ambitious turn with social and physical repugnance.”¹⁶¹ Jesus is here condemning the motive behind the actions of people who give to others in order that they themselves will benefit in the end. Ross makes a most disturbing parallel for today: “In subtler forms the temptation remains and the whisper sometimes runs through the streets of Vanity Fair that the Church is worth neither heeding nor persecuting, because she is only the world in Sunday clothes. She has her welcomes, but not for the hungry. She has her promotions, but not for the lowly. If the Church makes her mistakes, she pays for them at the hand of her God.”¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸Ibid, 23.

¹⁵⁹Bowie, 252.

¹⁶⁰Manson, 172.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

¹⁶²112.

34. Parable of Great Banquet (14:15-24)

Entrance into the kingdom of God is by invitation only. People can only answer the invitation because God calls them. “Although foolish beyond comprehension, man may and does resist God’s grace.”¹⁶³ Excuses for resisting the invitation vary tremendously. But that is the point in this parable. No resistance makes logical sense. However, “the three excuses give a picture of a successful secular society. . . . All these areas are necessary to the full life, but in themselves they are means without any end – in short, an idolatry.”¹⁶⁴ The resisters are the Jews. So, the Christian mission is extended to Gentiles or non-Jews. “He will cancel the original invitations to the messianic feast.”¹⁶⁵

35. Costliness of Discipleship (14:25-35)

The conditions of discipleship are costly and require more than a simple and single prayer of acceptance: (a) there must be no family-claims which are more important than discipleship; the word “hate” means “to love less”; there can be no divided loyalty between family-claims and fellowship-claims. (b) there must be cross-bearing – aborting one’s lower desires when they clash with those of Christ; a willingness to die, if need be. (c) there must be a counting-the-cost syndrome – this is to avoid failing to finish the course, and to avoid sarcastic mockery by outsiders which could disparage their understanding of the kingdom of God by failing to finish the course. It is a call of renunciation of all for the sake of God and His mission on this earth. “The spirit of self-sacrifice is the point.”¹⁶⁶

Chapter 15 employs parables to emphasize the role of “joy” in recovering what *was lost* but now *is found*. The reason for setting forth these three parables springs from the criticism of the Pharisees and scribes over Jesus’ receiving and eating with sinners. Instead of shrinking into sadness over their sour attitude, Jesus elevates the importance of “joy” and exhibits why finding what was lost is so central to His mission and message (15:1-2).

36. The Joy of the Good Shepherd (15:3-7)

Despite having ninety-nine sheep which are safely in the fold, the absence of one of them motivates the owner to seek strategically for the one that is missing, and does so “until he find it.” His search is not to see “if” he can find it. Rather, he seeks “until.” The recovery of the one brings forth rejoicing and merits celebration with his friends and neighbors. Of course,

¹⁶³Stagg, 98.

¹⁶⁴Bowie, 257.

¹⁶⁵Gilmour, 258.

¹⁶⁶Robertson, 203.

“every human being knows the joy of finding things lost. It is only in religion that men lose the scent of simple universal truths.”¹⁶⁷ However, as the Good Shepherd seeks and finds those who are lost, even if it is only one, even so “repentant sinners give Jesus more joy than the proud Pharisees who thought they needed no repentance.”¹⁶⁸ As Bowie so aptly puts it, “the sheep is our wayward humanity, the slope is the wasteland that sin makes, the danger is the risk the shepherd runs, the arm is the arms of Jesus, the overarching sky is all God’s love.”¹⁶⁹

37. The Joy of the Diligent Woman (15:8-10)

The same point is made in this parable. It is the “one” coin which is lost, compared to the ten which is in her possession. The eagerness and thoroughness which the woman displayed is arresting, as well as the use, again, of the word “until.” Bruce calls attention to an important fact: “a drachma was a piece of money of inconsiderable value, yet of value to the poor woman who owned only ten drachmas in all; its finding therefore a source of keen joy to her,”¹⁷⁰ The result is the same as the finding of the one lost sheep. The expression, “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God,” is “the joy of God himself. The angels are in a sense the neighbours of God.”¹⁷¹ “It is the second ingredient in the Master’s gracious defence of Himself for loving and seeking the sinful.”¹⁷² Childers offers three perspectives on this parable: “(1) There are none so worthless but the Lord is deeply concerned about them; (2) There are no exertions, however, great, which He will not use for their recovery; (3) There is nothing so pleasing to Him as the recovery of one from his lost estate.”¹⁷³

38. The Joy of the Loving Father (15:11-32)

The longest of the three parables is, perhaps, one of the most familiar or popular of the parables. Nevertheless, the overarching point is the same. However, there is some modification, since there are two primary points being made about two brothers. The younger son stands for the publicans and sinners and the elder son stands for the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees who criticized Jesus for eating with publicans and sinners. The father of the two sons stands for God Whose provisions for both are on par with His nature as God the Father Who loves both. The younger son finally accepted his father’s acceptance of him, even though he knew he did not deserve it. The elder son only fussed and fumed over the father’s

¹⁶⁷Bruce, 578.

¹⁶⁸Stagg, 102.

¹⁶⁹267-268.

¹⁷⁰Bruce, 579.

¹⁷¹Robertson, 207.

¹⁷²Ross, 137-138.

¹⁷³557.

acceptance of his brother. He did not share the joy of his father over his brother's return to the fold. But there is no notice of any reduction of the father's joy over the younger brother's return. So, what is God's joy should be our joy. After all, to be saved from utter and complete destruction depends on either "absolute obedience to moral law or, the forgiveness of sins."¹⁷⁴ Absolute obedience, of course, is impossible, but the promise of forgiveness is not. So, this so-called Parable of the Prodigal Son "is not exactly parallel with the other two. Its point would seem to lie in the contrast between the delight of a father at the return of his scapegrace son, and the churlish attitude of the 'respectable' elder brother. The application, however, is to the same situation in the ministry of Jesus. So Luke represents it, and we cannot doubt that he is right."¹⁷⁵ In the words of Edersheim, this error of the elder son represents the errors of Pharisaism. The relationship of the father and son is not based on "merit and reward, as work and return. Such murmuring [by the Pharisees] came from thoughts of work and pay – wrong in themselves, and foreign to the proper idea of Father and son; such joy, from a Father's heart. The elder brother's were the thoughts of a servant: of service and return; the younger brother's was the welcome of a son in the mercy and everlasting love of a Father. And this to us, and to all time!"¹⁷⁶ Thus, the all-time clash between the Jewish religious leaders and the Son of God the Father!

39. Parable of the Shrewd Manager (16:1-13)

In this parable, the central thrust is "to put money in its proper service, that of friendship or community rather than enmity and division."¹⁷⁷ Jesus commends this manager for his shrewdness. That is, he had mismanaged his master's business and in order to help himself after he had been fired, he allowed others to pay off their debts at a discount. He was thereby acting in a manner to take care of his own financial future by placing his master's debtors under obligation to himself. The master actually commends this shrewd maneuver. "Such foresight is worthy of appreciation. . . . Just as the unrighteous manager was prudent in considering what the future required, so we must be prudent in considering how God desires us to handle his resources."¹⁷⁸

40. God Despises Divided Loyalties (16:14-15)

The love of money and the love and service of God cannot stand side-by-side with each other. The rich may seek to show others their strong

¹⁷⁴Ross, 152.

¹⁷⁵Dodd, 93.

¹⁷⁶Book IV, 263.

¹⁷⁷Stagg, 105.

¹⁷⁸Bock, 421.

religious status through deeply held religious acts: almsgiving, prayer, fasting, etc. But God looks on the heart and “pious acts are robbed of their significance by the wrong motive which leads to ultimate self-defeat. Men may exalt him, but by the same token he goes down in God’s scale of values.”¹⁷⁹

41. Authority of the Law (16:16-18)

For the Pharisees, the authority of the law was preeminent, even though the law and the prophets were only the preface to God’s fulfilling both in the New Testament. That is, the law is not the final revelation of God. It was never invalidated but it was fulfilled or came to completion in Christianity. This is illustrated in marriage and divorce. “But we misuse his teaching on the ideal for marriage if it becomes the point of departure for establishing a new legalistic casuistry to be used as the basis for distinguishing between ‘good’ people and ‘bad.’ This subtle snare of legalism, which makes Christianity the very kind of institution which Jesus attacked, must be avoided.”¹⁸⁰

42. Parable of Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31)

This parable is an additional example of one’s attempts to justify himself before God. The rich man had lived luxuriously on earth, neglecting the needs of Lazarus. He was self-centered to the core. Even in hell, he was concerned chiefly with himself. “Even his plea that his five brothers be warned against a like fate was only a thinly-veiled effort to justify himself. In effect, he was saying, ‘If I had been adequately warned, I would not have ended up this way.’ Abraham corrected him, saying that the problem was not that the warnings were insufficient, but that they were unheeded. Both he and his brothers needed better ears, not a clearer warning. The rich man was to blame for his plight, yet he tried to justify himself. He only fooled himself, not God.”¹⁸¹ This sin of the rich man was not what he did, but what he did not do. As a typical representative of the rich and their Pharisaical spirit, “however orthodox, however eminent, however self-satisfied, [he] is dead among his splendours, a corpse of a man, his purple and fine linen shroud of a soul’s decay.”¹⁸²

43. Forgiveness and Faith (17:1-10)

It is serious, and even shockingly serious: it would be better to be cast into the sea and drown than to cause a little one (child or anyone with

¹⁷⁹Tolbert, 130.

¹⁸⁰Ibid, 131.

¹⁸¹Stagg, 107.

¹⁸²Ross, 183.

childlike faith) to stumble, fall, or experience a downfall in the faith. Plus, the positive way to prevent such, or to respond to such if it happens, is through forgiveness. The disciples, upon hearing such, asked that Jesus would increase their faith. Jesus spoke, therefore, not about its quantitative features but about its nature. “Faith is not a magic charm for removing literal mountains, but a channel through which may flow God’s infinite power.”¹⁸³ “The slave who only does what he is commanded by his master to do has gained no merit or credit. . . . The slavish spirit gains no promotion in business life or in the kingdom of God.”¹⁸⁴ As Bruce notes, “in point of fact it is not commands but demands we have to deal with, arising out of special emergencies. . . . But the idea is: the hardest demands of the Kingdom are met in a spirit of patience and humility, a thing possible only for men who are as remote as possible from a slavish spirit: heroic, generous, working in the spirit of free self-devotion. Such men are *not* unprofitable servants in God’s sight; rather He accounts them as ‘good and faithful.’”¹⁸⁵

44. Gratitude (17:11-19)

The tragedy of ingratitude is graphically illustrated in the fact that of the ten lepers who were healed, only one returned with gratitude. Just think of it: nine of the former lepers had experienced “deliverance from a living death”¹⁸⁶ but failed to recognize the indebtedness such deliverance afforded them. Did they think they deserved it? Perhaps they would not have disputed their indebtedness if someone had challenged them in this regard. But such was apparently not the case. It is, perhaps, a sense of entitlement which clouded their vision. On the other hand, the one who did return with gratitude was a despised Samaritan. He, of all people, “recognized God as the source of the great blessing to him, and made the air resound, as he retraced his steps, with songs and shouts of praise to God.”¹⁸⁷ Jesus was shocked at such lack of positive responsiveness from the nine. Jesus provided total healing to the one with gratitude. Maclaren suggests four main points about this encounter: “(1) The leper’s cry and the Lord’s strange reply; (2) The healing granted to obedient faith; (3) The solitary instance of thankfulness; (4) Christ’s sad wonder at man’s ingratitude and joyful recognition of ‘this stranger’s’ thankfulness.”¹⁸⁸ Indeed, “both in regard to earthly and spiritual blessings we are all sinners by unthankfulness and we all lose much thereby.”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸³Stagg, 108.

¹⁸⁴Robertson, 227.

¹⁸⁵Bruce, 37.

¹⁸⁶Spence, 101.

¹⁸⁷Bliss, 261.

¹⁸⁸127-130.

¹⁸⁹Ibid, 131.

45. Coming of the Kingdom of God (17:20-37)

The Pharisees, like all Jews, were looking for the coming of the kingdom of God. Their viewpoint was that of a mighty victorious warrior who would slash the throats of the Romans and establish an open, visibly celebratory kingdom with powerful rulers in charge of it all. Jesus quenched their expectations by declaring that the kingdom would not arrive in “outward phenomena”¹⁹⁰ and bold displays of military might. There would be no heralds of “here it is,” or “at last, it is now before you in splendor.” The Pharisees had “entirely mistook God’s purpose, and fatally misinterpreted his procedure.”¹⁹¹ Jesus declares that it is “in the midst of,” or “within” or “among” you. Its meaning is that God lays His claim “upon the heart, i.e., upon man’s will and loyalties, and demands a decision by repenting or turning to God and making him their king.”¹⁹² God is the Reigning King despite what is about to happen to Jerusalem – where the Jews had put their hope. Jerusalem will be destroyed and there will be no time or need to accumulate earthly goods. The days will be so devastating that God’s people will be longing for Christ’s return. But no one knows when that will happen. It is a waste of time to speculate. Jesus simply left a popular proverb before them: “where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together” (37). The apparent meaning is His coming will occur on God’s timetable. “We must live so that whenever he comes, at morning, at mid-day or at evening, he will find us ready.”¹⁹³

46. Parable of Persistency (18:1-8)

Despite the destruction of Jerusalem and the delay in His coming, Jesus calls for dutifulness without losing heart and faith by staying persistent in prayerfulness. He illustrates this by contrast. An earthly judge, in light of persistent pleas from a woman in distress, “might overcome the sluggishness of one most utterly void of piety, justice, and philanthropy – fearing not God, nor caring for the rights and wrongs and sufferings of men – [thus proving] what power it would have with our just and compassionate God.”¹⁹⁴ So, again, don’t lose heart and faith. Jesus concludes with a stirring, somber, and salient question: When He returns at the end of the age, will He find “a persistence faith like that of the widow?”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁰Bliss, 262.

¹⁹¹Clarkson, 101.

¹⁹²Tolbert, 137.

¹⁹³Barclay, 221.

¹⁹⁴Bliss, 267.

¹⁹⁵Robertson, 232.

47. Parable of Humility (18:9-14)

The Pharisees were devoid of humility before God and others. They were infected with “*self*-righteousness – and this, both in its positive and negative aspects: as trust in one’s own estate, and as contempt of others.”¹⁹⁶ The Publican, on the other hand, was dressed in humility and was totally aware of his need. He, unlike the Pharisee whose appeal to justice resided within himself, appealed to God for undeserved mercy. A more thorough and contrasting scenario could not be forthcoming. The Pharisee sensed no need of repentance since he bathed himself in self-congratulatory songs of praise and confidence. The Publican, by his self-degradation and sense of utter spiritual poverty, received God’s nod of acceptance and justification. Indeed, “there was mercy for him, all sin-stained though he was.”¹⁹⁷ So, humility may be regarded as “God-consciousness” versus “self-consciousness.”

48. Childlikeness (18:15-17)

After noting the value of persistency in prayer and humility in prayer to obtain mercy, Jesus now states that it is “*simplicity* like that of children [which] gives close union and familiarity with God”¹⁹⁸ and, therefore, qualifies for and defines those who are in the Kingdom of God. That is, such kingdom people have “no lofty thoughts of self but clinging trust”¹⁹⁹ in the Father. Any other spirit bars one from the kingdom of God. Indeed, as Clarkson sums up, these three components are key features for kingdom people: (1) “*docility*, or readiness to accept what is told us; (2) simplicity – transparent, sincere; (3) trustfulness – to commit itself and all its everlasting interests to the Almighty Saviour.”²⁰⁰

49. Rich Young Ruler (18:18-30)

Despite his wealth and his position as a ruler, this man was utterly dissatisfied. He still needed something to fill in the gap – whatever it may have been. So, he inquired about “eternal life,” as if it were something else he could obtain by his own efforts. With a single stroke, Jesus wiped away his misgivings about eternal life and himself. As far as the law was concerned, he insisted that all was well with his soul. But when it came to discarding his wealth and his trust therein, he bowed out, not down. He declined to abandon his wealth and give to the poor and follow Jesus. This rich man trusted in the uncertainty of riches and preferred to leave God out of his account. Jesus’ declaration about the difficulty of rich

¹⁹⁶Edersheim, 289.

¹⁹⁷Spence, 109.

¹⁹⁸Bengel, 497.

¹⁹⁹Maclaren, 139.

²⁰⁰Clarkson, 124-125.

people to enter the kingdom of God led others to wonder the width of the range of possibility when it comes to salvation. Peter recalled that they had left all to follow Him. Jesus assures them that their recompense for doing so will be found in this life (with new relationships with others who have also devoted themselves wholeheartedly to Him) and in the life to come where eternal life will be consummated and total and absolute satisfaction will be experienced by those who have been “living in God and for God.”²⁰¹

50. Prediction of Death & Resurrection (18:31-34)

This is the sixth (5:35; 9:22, 44-45; 12:49-50; 13:32-33; 17:25) time Jesus refers to His death and resurrection. However, here Jesus adds to different features to the account: (1) His actions are a fulfillment of the prophets (v. 31); and (2) the disciples’ lack of understanding how this could be the will of God (v. 34). “This dullness of the disciples is very disappointing to us who have seen them in stained-glass windows and who idealize them somewhat because of their proximity to the Master.”²⁰²

51. Healing of Blind Man (18:35-43)

This healing is significant in that Jesus is presented as “Son of David,” a clear-cut “messianic title.”²⁰³ The blind man trusts that as such, Jesus has the power to deliver and restore his vision. Jesus grants the man’s request and declares that his faith made this possible. The blind man, therefore, “begins to follow Jesus and praise God. The people likewise change their tune and praise God.”²⁰⁴

52. Jesus and Zacchaeus (19:1-10)

This is another example of Jesus overcoming Jewish barriers to the real presence of God. Zachaeus was a chief tax-gatherer which in itself “aroused the hostility of the Jews.”²⁰⁵ Nevertheless, he forces his way through the crowd, perching himself in a sycamore tree, and awaits the arrival and attention of Jesus. Without reservations or hesitations, Jesus notifies him of His intentions to stay at his house that day. He likewise, without reservations or hesitations, received Him gladly. “Nothing was as yet clear to him, and yet all was joyous within his soul. . . . In that moment Zacchaeus vowed fourfold restoration, as by a thief, of what had become his through false accusation, as well as

²⁰¹Edgar, 134.

²⁰²Ross, 20.

²⁰³Tolbert, 145.

²⁰⁴Bock, 475.

²⁰⁵Lang, 140.

the half of all his goods to the poor. And as the whole current of his life had been turned, in those few moments, through his joyous reception of Christ, the Saviour of sinners; and Zacchaeus the public robber, the rich Chief of the Publicans, had become an almsgiver.”²⁰⁶

53. Parable of Stewardship (19:11-27)

This parable teaches that there will be a delay in the return of Christ. However, in His absence, His followers are entrusted with various duties or responsibilities. When He does finally return, He will reward his servants “according to their diligence and will punish his enemies.”²⁰⁷ Indeed, “whosoever avails himself of every opportunity which the Lord gives him will become inwardly richer and will always have more and better opportunities of working for Him and of thus laying up a rich treasure in heaven. But he who, through estrangement of heart towards Him, neglects the precious opportunities of working for Him commits spiritual suicide.”²⁰⁸

Ross sums up the parable accordingly: (1) *The Master has gone away: there is time to trade.* (2) *The Master will come back: the time will pass.* (3) *When the Master has His final account with His servants, diligence does not go unrewarded.*²⁰⁹

Luke’s version of this story, compared with Matthew, “substitutes extravagance for unfaithfulness [and] is replaced by Luke’s nobleman who goes on a journey to claim a kingdom (v. 12); his fellow citizens attempt to frustrate his purpose by sending a deputation after him (v. 14); but he returns as king (v. 15a, cf. also the ‘cities’ in vv. 17 and 19) and has his enemies slaughtered before his eyes (v. 27).”²¹⁰

The Jerusalem Ministry, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus (19:28-24:53)

B. Entry of Jesus (19:28-21:4)

1. Cooperation with Jesus (19:28-44)

“This passage erudes divine authority.”²¹¹ The journey to Jerusalem was about 17 miles. “The prophets had a regular custom of which they made use again and again. When words were of no effect, when people refused to take in and understand the spoken message, they resorted to some dramatic action which put their message into a picture which none could fail to see. . . . the ride into Jerusalem [on a colt] would be an un-

²⁰⁶Edersheim, Book 4, 354.

²⁰⁷Gilmour, 328.

²⁰⁸Geldenhuys, 476.

²⁰⁹34-37.

²¹⁰Jeremias, 59.

²¹¹Butler, 426.

mistakable claim to be the Messiah, God's Anointed King."²¹² Barclay proceeds to note several important features of this entry: "(i) It was carefully planned. (ii) It was an act of glorious defiance and of superlative courage. (iii) It was a deliberate claim to be king, a deliberate fulfilling of the picture in *Zechariah* 9:9, (iv) It was one last appeal."²¹³ The colt/ass upon which Jesus rode had symbolic significance: "meekness and peace combine in Jesus' selection of an ass for his entry into Jerusalem."²¹⁴ The phrase, "the Lord has need of him," is "plainly supernatural."²¹⁵ The spreading of "their clothes in the way," is "another touching display of their reverence."²¹⁶ This "grand view stirred the crowd to rapturous enthusiasm."²¹⁷ Some of the Pharisees told Jesus to rebuke His disciples for this display of divinity in motion. Jesus' replied in hyperbole or a proverb for "the impossible happening,"²¹⁸ that the stones would cry out if they held refused to speak. The failure of these Pharisees to comprehend the full important of this messianic manifestation of Jesus was nothing less than "the result of prejudice and self-interest [and] no excuse for their murderous opposition to him."²¹⁹

2. Cleansing of Temple by Jesus (19:45-48)

Jesus now "exercises supreme authority in the Temple."²²⁰ Luke's account of this cleansing is shorter than that of Mark. "Yet even his brief mention of it is enough to stab our spirits awake to a side of Christ's spirit and mission to which we do not always do justice. Our Lord was the Prince of Peace and the Prince of Peacemakers; be He was not a pacifist in the sense that He was willing to let evil have a quiet life and an unopposed triumph."²²¹ This majesty display of power or authority was followed by daily teaching in the Temple. The religious leaders united against Him, as well as "the socially important people who, though laymen, agreed with the professionals in their dislike of Jesus."²²² Nevertheless, they could not find anything they could do to Him, "for all the people hung upon His words." "This cleavage between the Jewish leadership and the people is a characteristic aspect of Luke's Gospel."²²³

²¹²Barclay, 239.

²¹³Ibid, 239-240.

²¹⁴Lenski, 961.

²¹⁵Ibid, 962.

²¹⁶Bliss, 284.

²¹⁷Robertson, 245.

²¹⁸Ibid, 246.

²¹⁹Bliss, 287.

²²⁰Ibid.

²²¹Ross, 51.

²²²Bruce, 611.

²²³Tolbert, 152.

3. Challenging of Jesus (20:1-8)

Questioning the authority by which a person says and/or does things commonly or typically places them in a corner from which they must respond with some acceptable answer to the question. It may be regarded as a way to challenge someone. In this setting, the Jewish religious leaders sought to do just that. Jesus, however, in typical rabbinic style, answers their question with a question of His own. To say that Jesus' authority was somehow linked with John the Baptist – since Jesus received baptism from him, was identified by him as the Lamb of God, and both had preached the kingdom of God – would be to admit that the mission of John and Jesus was from heaven but they did not believe him. To say that John's baptism was from men would lead to them being stoned since the people believed that John was a prophet. Therefore, it was they who had been backed into a corner, a corner from which they could not safely escape. They could only confess their ignorance. Jesus took advantage of their ignorance by refusing to answer their question directly.

4. Comparisons by Jesus (20:9-19)

Jesus now turns “from the bickerings and insincerities of the religious leaders to the larger and less sophisticated audience which was still within the sound of His voice.”²²⁴ He addresses a very common or familiar transaction. A man plants a vineyard and leaves for another country. Yet, in his absence, he puts tenants in charge of it. Various servants are eventually sent to gain some fruit from the vineyard. All his servants met with resistance and tragedy. When he sent his son, he likewise met a tragic ending. The thrust of this parable was that these characters represented Israel, the prophets, and Jesus. The vineyard was the nation of Israel; the prophets were the rejected messengers from God; and Jesus Himself was likewise persecuted and killed. “And the doom is that the place which Israel should have occupied is to be given to others.”²²⁵ The quotation about the stone which the builders rejected is from Ps. 118:22-23 – an unmistakable reference to Jesus. It was a slap in their faces and “he, in no ambiguous terms, told them that in killing Him they will not be done with Him, for that in the end they will be utterly crushed by His power.”²²⁶

5. Caesar and Jesus (20:20-26)

The question of tribute refers to “the personal, direct tax required by the Roman government of the citizens of Palestine. It was a constant, inflammatory reminder to them of their subjugation by a foreign power. The

²²⁴Ross, 57.

²²⁵Barclay, 245.

²²⁶Spence, 167.

question of tribute was, therefore, a burning issue among the people.”²²⁷ Instead of succumbing to their plot to foil Him, Jesus “does not content himself with an answer to their secular question merely, but shows that there is a religious side to secular duties. Fidelity to the state is not only consistent with duty to God, but is included in it.”²²⁸ So, what belonged to Caesar should be given to Caesar and what belongs to God should be given to Him. As usual, their efforts to entrap Him were defeated, so, having been mesmerized – and somewhat paralyzed - by Him, they left Him and held their peace.

6. Confutation of Sadducees by Jesus (20:27-44)

The Sadducees were the aristocratic, ruling class among the Jews who only accepted the written law of God in the Old Testament as set forth by Moses. They did not believe in the Messiah whom they perceived could upset their established routines of power. They did not believe in the resurrection, since it was not mentioned in the OT, nor in the prophets. So, they sought to set a trap for Jesus by asking a question about the marriage of someone who had been married seven times. With a sarcastic smile and disdain, they quoted Deut. 25:5 and asked, “Whose wife would she be in the resurrection?” After all, no one else had ever been able to answer their question, and they were sure they had caught Jesus in their trap. But in a shocking maneuver, “Jesus’ answer begins with a contrast between this world and the heavenly state of righteousness. Those who belong to this world marry and are given in marriage, but those who attain to that world and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are they given in marriage. Marriage is for this age, but in the resurrection they are equal – in this respect – to the angels. They are called sons of God because they have been raised from the dead.”²²⁹ Some of the scribes, who were mostly Pharisees and members of the Sanhedrin [the ruling or governing class of the Jews who basically were in collaboration with Rome], were satisfied with His answer and suspended their questions.

7. Condemnation of Scribes by Jesus (20:45-47)

This condemnation or denunciation of the scribes means that “Jesus claims the right to judge men’s motives and actions and their love for the wrong thing which was self-centered. Pride and power were the motives for their actions . . . while making a pretense to be very religious by reciting long prayers.”²³⁰ They have earned their condemnation. Only God can be trusted “to preserve us from hypocrisy and

²²⁷Tolbert, 155.

²²⁸Bliss, 294.

²²⁹Applebury, 337-338.

²³⁰Butler, 459.

and spiritual decay.”²³¹ Their religion of rules and rituals ruined their relationship with God: rules and rituals which ran counter to both the will of God and His nature. “It was a tragic-comedy of trifles.”²³²

8. Compassion and Commendation of Jesus (21:1-4)

Having filtered His way through the bitter criticism of the religious leaders, Jesus’ attention is somewhat captivated as He observed the rich Jews bestowing their gifts into the Temple treasury. “The long discussions had wearied Him, and He had been sitting with down-cast or closed eyes.”²³³ His impressions were quickly stirred when He look up, however, and saw the rich in their typical impressionist giving, and more positively upon the humble and “silent worship of her who gave her all. It comes to us the more welcome, that it exhibits in deed what Christ had said to those hypocrites who had discussed it, whether the tribute given to Caesar was not robbing God of what was His. Truly here was one, who, in the simplicity of her humble worship, gave to the Lord what was His!”²³⁴ It was not for the large sums of the rich but “this splendid generosity on the part of the poor solitary widow which won the Lord’s praise.”²³⁵

IV PRONOUNCEMENTS by Jesus (21:5-38)

A. Perilous Times Foretold by Jesus (21:5-28)

As some were speaking about the fascinating aspects of the temple, Jesus refused to join in with their chorus of celebration over such. Instead, He stated quite bluntly that this temple would soon be destroyed. This would be one of the many aspects of the perilous times which were before them. Some would arrive on the scene declaring that they were the Messiah and the end was near. Jesus cautioned them about this so as not to be deceived and join the dance chorus which some would do. However, this is not an indication of the end. Even the outbreak of wars and various other tumultuous disturbances are not indicative of the end either. International conflicts, environmental disruptions, other impending catastrophes, as well as manifestations in the skies and disturbances in the heavenly bodies will occur but they are not forecasts of the end either. Persecutions will also continue. Betrayals by family members and actual deaths will follow. But instead of viewing them as additional indicators of the end, they are best understood as motives for spreading the gospel. In a hyperbolic assurance of being within God’s security system, not even a hair of their heads will perish.

²³¹Geldenhuys, 519.

²³²Butler, 460.

²³³Plummer, 475.

²³⁴Edersheim, 387.

²³⁵Spence, 183.

This, however, should not be taken to indicate escape from physical dangers for such was rarely the case. Again, it serves to promote the need and possibility of persevering through it all.

Again, the destruction of Jerusalem is expanded in vs. 20-24. Note, however, that even it is not associated with the parousia or coming of Christ at the end of time. However, the destruction is a result of its fate for “obstinately clinging to its rebellious nationalism, [having] rejected God’s Messiah because he did not fit into their own ideas of the kingdom of God.”²³⁶

B. Parable of Fig Tree by Jesus (21:29-33)

Since the sprouting of the fig tree and all others is a sign that summer is on its way, so, the perilous times are certain indicators that the kingdom of God is near. This words, “this generation” refers to “those who were contemporaries of Jesus, some of whom were still alive at the time of the conflict with Rome.”²³⁷ As His previous words have been true, so they will continue to be so. They will never be invalidated or proven false and misleading.

C. Parousia of Jesus (21:34-36)

The temptation for Christians to become so integrated with worldly concerns is constant. It is possible to become excessively involved with the visual and auditory attractions of life: drunkenness, food, clothing, financial matters, etc. It is not that these are not important, in their own way, but they must not be prioritized or arranged at the top of one’s pyramid wherein pursuit of the kingdom of God is mitigated or marginalized. Rather, that which should be prioritized is prayerful watching for strength to endure all the trials and perilous times in their midst. Indeed, “prayer and never-ending watchfulness are the key to constant readiness [to serve God here and now]. This demands our own efforts plus the help of God obtained through prayer.”²³⁸ The words, “to stand before Him,” means “to stand unharmed in his judgment, over against falling under his adverse judgment.”²³⁹ As Robertson adds, “there will be no dread of the Son then if one is ready.”²⁴⁰ Geldenhuys stresses that the word “stand” implies standing “firm amidst all the temptations, struggle and distress that will accompany the prelude to the End,”²⁴¹ which also gives the word an existential meaning: if we are not standing firm before Him now, there will be no firm standing before Him then. The expression,

²³⁶Tolbert, 161.

²³⁷Ibid, 163.

²³⁸Childers, 592.

²³⁹Lenski, 1031.

²⁴⁰262.

²⁴¹544

“the Son of Man,” is a victorious Messianic note. The standing before Him may primarily mean standing before Him and with Him in opposition to the temptations to pull one away from His will in the midst of the perilous times.

D. Parenthesis about Jesus (21:37-38)

This is a semi-parenthetical, summary statement of Jesus’ activity prior to the passions of sufferings into which He is about to enter. He gives general statements about His activities from morning to night. The words, “early in the morning,” indicates “earliness in the people implies earliness in Jesus, and corresponding devotion to the work – early to learn is in earnest.”²⁴²

V PASSIONS of Jesus (22:1-23:56)

A. Plot to Kill Jesus (22:1-3)

The ideation among the chief priests and scribes to kill Jesus has been in the making for some time, but due to their fear of the people it had not yet materialized. While the Passover was a one-night meal, the Feast of Unleavened Bread lasted a week. It was during this time that the plot to kill Jesus rather quickly expanded into specifics.

B. Price Agreement Concerning Betrayal of Jesus (22:4-6)

The plot to kill Jesus thickened as the money-man Judas initiated contact with the chief priests and captains as to how he could betray Jesus without causing a riot. Their frowns quickly turned into smiles. Having reached a monetary agreement, he began looking for a time and place in which to betray Him without the presence of the multitude. Judas became the servant of Satan who always choosing evil.

C. Passover and Lord’s Supper with Jesus (22:7-38)

The first day of the feast was the day of the Passover. Preparation for it was precisely organized and arranged. “The purchase, slaughter, and roasting of the paschal lamb and the provision of unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and wine”²⁴³ were forthcoming. The details of the supper speak of His death. Nevertheless, in the midst of it all, the disciples squirmed in their seats as to who among them would be the greatest. Jesus’ earthly illustration was that kingdom greatest cannot be measured in terms of worldly standards, criteria, or procedures. “Jesus finished his warning by promising his disciples that those who stood by him through thick and thin would in the end reign with him. God will be in no man’s debt.

²⁴²Bruce, 623.

²⁴³Gilmour, 377.

Those who have shared in the bearing of Christ's cross will some day share in the wearing of his crown."²⁴⁴ Jesus prayerfully predicts Peter's failure, as well as his restoration. However, in light of the change of attitude among the Jewish people, the disciples of Jesus will now need "money, provisions, and even means of defense."²⁴⁵ Whatever the precise meaning of "swords" may be, Ross notes, "at the most, He hinted at the needful defence of life and loved ones in the midst of a rough and unsettled world."²⁴⁶

D. Praying of Jesus (22:39-46)

Despite His intense, passionate prayer for removal of what He knew was before Him, He spoke a word of submission: "nevertheless." The agony must be replaced with action, all in accordance with God's will. "In this hour of overwhelming distress through the carrying forward of God's plan, he still looks up with filial confidence to him as his Father."²⁴⁷ Nevertheless, His prayers intensified. With a degree of sensitivity which is hard to comprehend for those not there, His disciples were so overwhelmed with grief or sorrow that they went to sleep – perhaps as their remedy for dealing with it. It was disappointing, however, that Jesus could not not trust them "for human sympathy."²⁴⁸ So, Jesus awakens them and "urges them once more to watch and pray, for only by remaining in living communion with God will they be able to resist the temptations that will assail them in the terrible happenings of the night and the following days."²⁴⁹

E. Partners against Jesus (22:47-71)

This section consists of the betrayer's kiss (22:47-53), Peter's denial (22:54-62), the mockery of Jesus (22:63-65), and the hearing before the Sanhedrin (22:66-71). It was a combination of partners with each playing their unique roles in pulling off the mysterious interplay between the power of darkness and the power of God. Indeed, "it is the best lesson to take from this scene of triumphant evil that the Master Himself was able to set against the obvious fact of the power of darkness the believing certainty of the power of God."²⁵⁰ Spence phrases the potential conundrum this way: "The general effect on the thoughtful reader is that the Crucifixion and the events leading up to it were very far from being the results of the counsels of the Jewish leaders, the outcome of their relentless enmity. The

²⁴⁴Barclay, 268.

²⁴⁵Gilmour, 386.

²⁴⁶126.

²⁴⁷Bliss, 321.

²⁴⁸Robertson, 273.

²⁴⁹Geldenhuys, 575-576.

²⁵⁰Ross, 140.

death and all the attendant circumstances took place in their solemn order, then, when the public teaching of the Redeemer was finished, *because* it had been determined by some higher and grander power than was possessed by Jerusalem Sanhedrin or Roman Senate.”²⁵¹

F. Pilate and Herod and Jesus (23:1-25)

Since the Jews had no authority to conduct the crucifixion, they created a fake trial, and did so on the basis of political lies: Jesus was charged: “(a) with seditious agitation; (b) with encouraging men not to pay tribute to Caesar; (c) with assuming the title of king. . . . They resorted to the most calculated and malicious lies in their well-nigh insane desire to eliminate Jesus.”²⁵² Pilate was dissatisfied with the proceedings and sent Him to Herod who together with his soldiers treated Him as a nobody and subjected Him to mockery but, like Pilate, did not find anything worthy of condemnation. On His return trip to Pilate, Pilate offered to simply scourge Him and release Him. The crowd demanded the release of the murderer Barabbas and the crucifixion of Jesus. He delivered Him to such.

G. Provision for and Proclamation by Jesus (23:26-31)

The scourging Jesus received left Him physically weakened and unable to carry His cross. Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry it. A great number of people – mostly women - followed them to the site of the crucifixion and were overwhelmed with grief. Jesus, however, was not thinking of Himself but of them and their children, noting that their tears must be for them. The outburst of a woman in the crowd about the blessedness of being His mother was overshadowed by His warning that “motherhood will be a curse in those days instead of a blessing, either because mothers will be torn with anxiety for the fate of their children or because children will interfere with any attempt of their mothers to flee the city.”²⁵³ The outcry will be for the forces of nature itself to kill them. The “green tree” refers to Jesus’ crucifixion and “the dry” refers to Jews who “ever disloyal to Rome and all Gentile authority, will bring on themselves with much stronger reason the terrible vengeance of the great conquering empire.”²⁵⁴

H. Place of a Skull and Crucifixion of Jesus (23:32-49)

Jesus and two others are now lead away for crucifixion. Luke does not focus much attention to the manner or maneuvers of the crucifixion itself. And Luke is the only one of the four gospel accounts to note the prayer

²⁵¹204

²⁵²Barclay, 278.

²⁵³Gilmour, 405.

²⁵⁴Spence, 239.

of Jesus for His enemies. The harassment of the criminals and the people continued with daring comments that He save Himself if He truly was what He claimed to be. But in a flash, one of the criminals repented and asked for forgiveness. He was given the promise of paradise with Jesus that very day. Even the centurion saw the innocence of this godly man and said so. The multitude returned home in sorrow. His friends and the women from Galilee observed at a distance.

I. Pallbearer and Burial of Jesus (23:50-56)

Joseph of Arimathea, being a good and righteous man and a member of the council, and who was looking for the kingdom of God, asked permission from Pilate to bury Jesus' body in a new tomb. The women from Galilee prepared spices and ointments with which to embalm His body but had to delay doing so since it was the sabbath – the day of rest.

VI POWER of Jesus (24:1-52)

A. Resurrection of Jesus (24:1-12)

Continuing with their plans to embalm His body on the next day, their return trip to the site of the tomb found the stone rolled away and did not find the body inside. In the midst of their perplexity, two men in dazzling apparel appeared to inform them that they should not seek the living among the dead, but rather should remember His words about His resurrection and they returned to tell the eleven disciples and all the rest that He was, indeed, resurrected. This good news was not believed or accepted. But Peter ran into the tomb and found what the women had reported to be true!

B. Appearances of Jesus (24:13-49)

Verses 13-35 record His appearance to those on the road to Emmaus where He talked with two of His disciples about the events of the crucifixion and the empty tomb; and verses 36-43 His appearance in Jerusalem where His resurrected body was seen and verified by eating a meal with them. He then gave a stirring message to His disciples in verses 44-49 about this good news which would change the world, and the importance of their role in doing so as witnesses of its reality. The promise of the Father was that of the Holy Spirit Who would make it all possible – the key idea of which will be resumed in Acts.

C. Ascension of Jesus (24:50-51)

His ascension conveyed to His disciples that the days of His flesh were over, but that a new beginning was before them with Him in heaven, but

nevertheless, as real as He ever was in the flesh, and even more so now from heaven's portals where nothing could ever cause sorrow or separation again – for Him or them. “So grand and mighty was the revelation of His divine Sonship in His majestic ascension, that the disciples spontaneously worshipped Him as Lord and King.”²⁵⁵

D. Obedience to Jesus (24:52)

In obedience to Him, they returned to Jerusalem and were continually in the Temple praising God – “which is the fruit of joy.”²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵Geldenhuys, 646.

²⁵⁶Bengel, 533.

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